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A

TREATISE

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ON THE

ART

OF

DANCING.

By *Giovanni-Andrea Gallini.*

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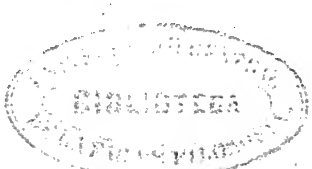

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ADVERTISEMENT.

WHAT I have here to ſay is rather in the nature of an apology than of a preface or advertiſement. The very title of a Treatiſe upon the art of dancing by a dancing-maſter, implicitly threatens ſo much either of the exageration of the profeſſion, or of the recommendation of himſelf, and moſt probably of both, that it cannot be improper for me to

beſpeak the reader's favorable precaution againſt ſo natural a prejudice. My principal motive for hazarding this production is, indiſputably, gratitude. The approbation with which my endeavours to pleaſe in the dances of my compoſition have been honored, inſpired me with no ſentiment ſo ſtrongly as that of deſiring to prove to the public, that ſenſibility of its favor; which, in an artiſt, is more than a duty. It is even one of the means of obtaining its favor, by its inſpiring that aim at perfection,

in

in order to the deſerving it, which is unknown to a merely mercenary ſpirit. Under the influence of that ſentiment, it occurred to me, that it might not be unpleaſing to the public to have a fair ſtate of the pretentions of this art to its encouragement, and even to its eſteem, laid before it, by a practitioner of this art. In ſtating theſe pretentions, there is nothing I ſhall more avoid than the enthuſiaſm ariſing from that vanity or ſelf-conceit, which leads people into the ridicule of over-rating the

merit or importance of their profeſſion. I ſhall not, for example, preſume to recommend dancing as a virtue; but I may, without preſumption, repreſent it as one of the principal graces, and, in the juſt light, of being employed in adorning and making Virtue amiable, who is far from rejecting ſuch aſſiſtence. In the view of a genteel exerciſe, it ſtrengthens the body; in the view of a liberal accompliſhment, it viſibly diffuſes a graceful agility through it; in the view of a private or public enter-

tertainment, it is not only a general inſtinct of nature, expreſſing health and joy by nothing ſo ſtrongly as by dancing; but is ſuſceptible withall of the moſt elegant collateral embelliſhments of taſte, from poetry, muſic, painting, and machinery.

One of the greateſt and moſt admired inſtitutors of youth, whoſe fine taſte has been allowed clear from the leaſt tincture of pedantry, Quintilian recommends eſpecially the talent of dancing, as conducive

to

to the formation of orators; not, as he very juſtly obſerves, that an orator ſhould retain any thing of the air of a dancing-maſter, in his motion or geſture; but that the impreſſion from the graces of that art ſhould have inſenſibly ſtoln into his manner, and faſhioned it to pleaſe.

Even that auſtere critic, Scaliger, made the principles of it ſo far his concern, that he was able perſonally to ſatisfy an Emperor's curioſity, as to the nature and meaning of

of the Pirrhic dance, by executing it before him.

All this I mention purely to obviate the prepoſſeſſion of the art being ſo frivolous, ſo unworthy of the attention of the manly and grave, as it is vulgarly, or on a ſuperficial view, imagined. It is not high notions of it that I am ſo weak as to aim at impreſſing; all that I wiſh is to give juſt ones: it being perhaps as little eligible, for want of conſideration, to ſee leſs in this art than

than it really deſerves, than, from a fond partiality for it, to ſee more than there is in it.

A

TREATISE

ON THE

ART of DANCING.

Of the ANTIENT *Dance.*

IN moſt of the nations among the antients, dancing was not only much practiſed, but conſtituted not even an inconſiderable part of their religious rites and ceremonies. The accounts we have of the ſacred dances, of the Jews eſpecially, as well as of other nations, evidently atteſt it.

The Greeks, who probably took their firſt ideas of this art, as they did of moſt others, from Egypt, where it was in great eſteem and practice, carried it up to a very high pitch. They were in general, in their bodies, extremely well conformed, and diſpoſed for this exerciſe. Many of them piqued themſelves on rivalling, in excellence of execution, the moſt celebrated maſters of the art. That majeſtic air, ſo natural to them, while they preſerved their liberty, the delicacy of their taſte, and the cultivated agility of their limbs, all qualified them for making an agreeable figure in this kind of entertainment. Nothing could be more graceful than the motion of their arms. They did not ſo much regard the nimbleneſs and capering with the legs and feet, on which we lay ſo great a ſtreſs. Attitude,

grace,

grace, expreſſion, were their principal object. They executed ſcarce any thing in dancing, without ſpecial regard to that expreſſion which may be termed the life and ſoul of it.

Their ſteps and motions were all diſtinct, clear, and neat; proceeding from a ſtrength ſo ſuppled, as to give their joints all the requiſite flexibility and obedience to command.

They did not ſo much affect the moderately comic, or half ſerious, as they did the great, the pompous, or heroic ſtile of dance. They ſpared for no pains nor coſt, towards the perfection of their dances. The figures were exquiſite. The leaſt number of the figurers were forty or fifty. Their dreſſes were magnificent and in taſte. Their decorations were ſublime. A

competent ſkill in the theatrical, or actor's art, and a great one in that of dancing, was neceſſary for being admitted into the number of figurers. In ſhort, every thing was in the higheſt order, and very fit to prove the miſtake of thoſe who imagine that the dances are, in operas for example, no more than a kind of neceſſary expletive of the intervals of the acts, for the repoſe of the ſingers.

The Greeks conſidered dancing in another point of light; all their feſtivals and games, which were in greater number than in other countries, were intermixed and heightened with dances peculiarly compoſed in honor of their deities. From before their altars, and from their places of worſhip, they were ſoon introduced upon their theatres, to which they were undoubtedly a prior invention. The ſtrophe, antiſtrophe,

and

and epode, were nothing but certain meaſures performed by a chorus of dancers, in harmony with the voice; certain movements in dancing correſpondent to the ſubject, which were all along conſidered as a conſtitutive part of the performance. The dancing even governed the meaſure of the ſtanzas; as the ſignification of the words ſtrophe and antiſtrophe, plainly imports, they might be properly called danced himns. The truth is, that tragedy and comedy, made alſo originally to be ſung, but which, in proceſs of time, upon truer principles of nature, came to be acted and declaimed, were but ſuper-inductions to the choruſes, of which, in tragedy eſpecially, the tragic-writers, could not well get rid, as being part of the religious ceremony.

This

This ſolves, in a great meaſure, the ſeeming abſurdity of their interference with the ſubject of the drama: being deemed ſo indiſpenſable a part of the performance, that the ſcene itſelf was hardly more ſo: conſequently, there was no ſecret ſuppoſed to be more violated by ſpeaking before them, than before the inanimate ſcene itſelf. But what was at leaſt excuſable, on this footing, in the antients, would be an unpardonable abſurdity in the moderns.

Athenæus, who has left us an account of many of the antient dances, as the *Mactriſmus*, a dance entirely for the female ſex, the *Moloſſic*, the Perſian *Sicinnis*, &c. obſerves, that in the earlieſt ages of antiquity, dancing was eſteemed an exerciſe, not only not inconſiſtent with decency and gravity, but

but practiſed by perſons of the greateſt worth and honor. Socrates himſelf, learnt the art, when he was already advanced in years.

Cautious as I am of uſing a falſe argument, I ſhould ſay, that the making dances a part of their religious ceremonies, was a mark of their attributing even a degree of ſanctity to them; but that I am aware there were many things that found a place in their feſtivals and games, which, among thoſe heathens, were ſo far from having any thing of ſacred in them, that they did not even ſhow a reſpect for common decency or morality.

But as to dancing, it may be preſumed, that that exerciſe was conſidered as having nothing intrinſically in it, contrary to purity of manners or chaſtity, ſince

ſince it made a conſiderable part of the worſhip paid to the preſiding goddeſs of that virtue, Diana, in the feſtivals conſecrated to her. Her altar was held in the higheſt veneration by the antients. Temples of the greateſt magnificence were erected in honor of this goddeſs. Who does not know the great Diana of Epheſus? The aſſemblies in her temples were ſolemn, and at ſtated periods. None were admitted but virgins of the moſt ſpotleſs character. They executed dances before the altar, in honor of the deity, with a moſt graceful decency; invoking her continual inſpiration of pure thoughts, and her protection of their chaſtity. Thoſe of them, who diſtinguiſhed themſelves above the reſt, by ſuperior graces of performance, received rewards not only from the prieſteſs of Diana, but from their own parents. Nor were the young

men

men but curiouſly inquiſitive, as to who particularly excelled on theſe occaſions. Diſtinction in theſe dances was a great incentive to love, and produced many happy unions.

Such of theſe virgins as married, retained, in quality of wives, ſuch a veneration for this ſort of worſhip, that they formed an aſſembly of matrons, who on ſet days, performed much the ſame devotion, imploring, in concert, of the goddeſs, a continuance of her gifts, and of that ſpirit of purity, the fitteſt to make them edifying examples of conjugal love and maternal tenderneſs.

Innocent amuſements having been ever reputed allowable, and even neceſſary expedients for relaxing both mind

and body from the fatigue of ſerious or robuſt occupations, Diana had her temples, eſpecially in countries proper for hunting, where the parents uſed to reſort with their children, and encouraged them to partake of the diverſions in which dancing had a principal ſhare.

The antients have left us an unaccountable deſcription of the Bacchanalians, whoſe deportment forms a ſtriking contraſt to the decent regularity obſerved in the worſhip of Diana. The Bacchanalians ſtrolled the country, and, in the courſe of that vagabond ſcheme, erected temporary huts, their reſidence being always ſhort wherever they came. In their intoxication they ſeemed to defy all decency and order; affecting noiſe, and a kind of tumultuous, boiſterous joy, in which there could never be any true pleaſure or harmony.

mony. They were, in the licentiouſneſs of their manners, a nuiſance to ſociety; which they ſcandalized and diſturbed by their riots, their mad frolics, and even by their quarrels. Their heads and waiſts were bound with ivy, and in their hands they brandiſhed a thirſus, or kind of lance, garniſhed with vine-leaves. When by any foulneſs of weather they were driven into their huts, they paſſed their time in a kind of noiſy merriment, of ſhoutings and dithirambic catches, accompanied by timpanums, by cymbals, by ſiſtrums, and other inſtruments, in which noiſe was more conſulted than muſic, and correſponded to the ſort of time they kept to them, in the frantic agitations of their Bacchic enthuſiaſm. The Corybantes were called ſo from their diſorderly dancing as they went along.

The Pirrhic dance differs not much from Plato's military dance. The invention of it is moſt generally attributed to Pirrhus, ſon of Achilles; at leaſt this opinion is countenanced by Lucian, in his treatiſe upon dancing; though it is moſt probably derived from the Memphitic dance of Egypt. The manner of it was to dance armed to the ſound of inſtruments. Xenophon takes notice of theſe dances in armour, eſpecially among the Thracians, who were ſo warlike a people. In their dance to muſic, they exhibited the imitation of a battle. They executed various evolutions; they ſeemed to wound each other mortally, ſome falling down as if they had received their death-wound; while thoſe who had given the blow ſung to the ſong of triumph, called

ed *Sitalia*, and then withdrew, leaving the reſt to take up their ſeeming dead comrade, and to make preparations for his mock-funeral, in the pantomime ſtile of dance. He has alſo deſcribed the dance of the Magneſians, in which they repreſented their tilling the ground, in an attitude, and in readineſs for defence, againſt expected moroders. They put themſelves in a poſture of protecting their plough, with other motions expreſſive of their reſolution and courage, all adapted to the ſound of the flute. The moroders arrive, prevail, and bind the huſbandmen to their plough, and this terminates the dance. Sometimes the dance varies, and the husbandmen prevailing, bind the moroders.

The ſame author mentions alſo the Myſians who danced in armour, and uſed a particular ſort of *peltæ* or targets, on

on which they received the blows. In ſhort, theſe armed dances had different names beſtowed upon them, according to the countries in which they were uſed.

The Egyptians and Greeks were extravagantly expenſive in their public feſtivals, of which, dancing always conſtituted a conſiderable part.

The Romans, among whom the more coarſe and licentious dances derived from the Hetruſcans, had at firſt prevailed, came at length to adopt the improvements of taſte, and conſequently of decency and regularity; the feſtivals, of which dancing was to compoſe the principal entertainment, were adapted to the ſeaſon of the year.

Every autumn, for example, it was a conſtant cuſtom, for thoſe who could afford

afford the expence, to build a magnificent ſaloon in the midſt of a delightful garden. This ball-room was decorated in the moſt brilliant manner: At one end of the ball-room ſtood a ſtatue of Pomona, ſurrounded with a great number of baſkets made in the neateſt manner, and full of all the fineſt fruits that the ſeaſon produced. Theſe, with the ſtatue, were placed under a canopy hung round with cluſters of real grapes and vine-leaves, ſo artfully diſpoſed as to appear of the natural growth. Theſe ſerved to refreſh both the eye and mouth. The performers of the ball went up to this part of the ſaloon, in couples, proceſſionally, to avoid confuſion. Each youth took care to help his partner to what ſhe liked beſt, and then returned, in the ſame regular manner, to the other end of the room, when they ſerved what remained to the reſt of the

the ſpectators. After which the ball immediately began.

I was ſhown, by an Italian painter, a curious picture in his poſſeſſion, of the antients celebrating one of this kind of feſtivals. The attitudes into which the figures were put, and which appeared to have been drawn for the concluſion of the ball, were beautiful beyond imagination.

In winter there were balls in the city of Rome; for which the appropriated apartments were commodious; and where the illuminations were ſo great, that notwithſtanding the uſual rigor of that ſeaſon, the room was ſufficiently warm.

Round the room there were tables and ſtands, on which was placed the deſert; and there were generally twelve perſons

ſons choſen to diſtribute the refreſh-ments, and do the honors of the ball. The whole was conducted with the utmoſt decency and regularity, while Rome preſerved her reſpect for virtue and innocence of manners.

By the beſt accounts procurable, their ſerious dances were properly inter-ſperſed and inlivened with comic move-ments. Their firſt ſteps were ſolemn and majeſtic, and, by couples they turned under each other's arms; and when the whole thus turned together, they could not but afford a pleaſing ſight. After which they reſumed the ſerious again, and ſo proceeded alternately till they concluded the dance.

In the ſpring, the country became naturally the ſcene of their dances. The beſt companies reſorted, eſpecially to

ſuch villages as were noted for the moſt pure and ſalubrious ſprings of water. If the weather was mild, they danced upon an open green; if not, they formed a large covered pavilion, in the middle of which they placed the ſtatue of Flora, ornamented with flowers, round which they performed their dances. Firſt the youth, then thoſe of riper years; and laſtly, thoſe of a more advanced age. After each of theſe diviſions had danced ſeparately, they all joined and formed one great circle. The moſt diſtinguiſhed for excellence in the performing theſe dances, had for reward the privilege of taking a flower, with great ſolemnity, from the ſtatue of the goddeſs. This was eſteemed ſo high an honor, that it is ſcarce imaginable how great an emulation this inſpired; as this privilege was to be obtained by the impartial determination of the beſt judges.

Sum-

Summer was however the ſeaſon in which the pleaſure of dancing was carried to the higheſt pitch. For the ſcene of it, they choſe a ſhady and delightful part of a wood, where the ſunſhine could not incommode them, and where care was taken to clear the ground underfoot, for their performance. A young lady of the moſt eminence for rank and beauty was choſen to perſonate the goddeſs Ceres. Her dreſs was of an exquiſite taſte, ornamented with tufts of gold, in imitation of wheatſheaves: while her head was decked with a kind of crown compoſed of ſpangles, repreſenting the ears of ripe corn, and perhaps, for the greater ſimplicity, of the natural grain itſelf. Thoſe who danced round her, all wore wreaths of the choiceſt flowers, and were dreſſed in white, with their hair flowing looſe, in the ſtile of wood-nimphs. On this

occaſion, there was always a great croud of ſpectators; and the joy that appeared in each parent's eye, when their daughters were applauded, made no ſmall part of the entertainment. As garlands, and wreaths of flowers compoſed the principal ornament of the perſons who performed in this dance, ſuch a reſpect was had for it by the people in general, that they abſtained from gathering any flowers, till after this feſtival was over.

I have myſelf ſeen a drawing of this rural dance, in which I counted no leſs than ſixty performers.

The celebrated Pilades is mentioned to have been the great improver of this dance. He excluded from it all jumping or capering, for fear of violating or of disfiguring the graceful regularity of the

the whole, which he conſidered as the moſt eſſential towards preſerving a pleaſing effect.

Not leſs than two months were the uſual time of preparation for this dance, to which there was always a confluence of perſons from all the neighbouring parts. But none were allowed the liberty of dancing, except perſons of the firſt rank and diſtinction in the country; the whole being regulated by ſome perſon acting in quality of *choragus*, or director of the dance.

The reign of Auguſtus Cæſar was undoubtedly the epoch, of the eſtabliſhment in Rome, of the art of dancing in its greateſt ſplendor. Cahuſac, an ingenious French author, in his hiſtorical treatiſe of this art, aſſigns to that emperor a deep political deſign in giving it

ſo

ſo great an encouragement as he undoubtedly did; that of diverting the Romans from ſerious thoughs on the loſs of their liberty; eſpecially in fomenting a diſſention among them, about ſo frivolous an object as the competition between thoſe two celebrated dancers, Pilades and Bathillus. That ſomething of this ſort might be the deſign of that emperor, is not to be doubted; but Cahuſac, over-heated, perhaps, by his ſubject, exagerates the importance of it beyond the bounds of cool reaſon. So much however is true, that thoſe two dancers were extremely eminent in their art, and may be eſteemed the founders of that theatrical dancing, or pantomime execution, for which it is not ſufficient to be only a good dancer, but there is alſo required the being a good actor; in both which lights, theſe two artiſts were allowed to excel, Pilades in the

ſerious

ſerious or tragic dance, Bathillus in the comic.

Theſe alſo founded a kind of academies of dancing, which produced ſeveral eminent artiſts, but none that ever equalled themſelves in performance or reputation. What hiſtory records of them, and of their powers, as well as of that theatrical pantomime dance, of which they were the introductors, in Rome, would exceed belief, if it was not atteſted by ſuch a number of authors as leave no room to think it an impoſition.

But as to dancing itſelf, either conſidered in a religious, or in only an amuſive light, it may be pronounced to have been among the Romans, as old as Rome itſelf, and like that rude in its beginnings, but to have received gradual

dual improvement, as faſt as the other arts and ſciences gained ground.

Proceſſional dances were alſo much in vogue among that people. They had eſpecially an anniverſary ceremony or proceſſion, called, from its pre-eminence, ſingly, POMPA, or the Pomp.

It was celebrated, in commemoration of a victory obtained over the Latians, the news of which was ſaid to have been brought by Caſtor and Pollux, in perſon. This feſtival, was, at firſt, conſecrated to Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva. But it was afterwards made more general, and celebrated in honor of all the Gods. This proceſſion was in the month of September. It began at the temple of *Jupiter Capitolinus*, proceeded to the *Forum Romanum*, from thence to the *Velabrum*, and after-

afterwards to the *Grand Circus*. You have in Onuphrius Panvinius, the order of this proceſſion at large, of which the directors were the chief magiſtrates of the city: the ſons of the nobility leading the van. Thoſe of the Equeſtrian order, whoſe fathers were worth a hundred and fifty thouſand ſeſterces, followed on horſeback. It would be here foreign from my purpoſe to give the whole deſcription of this proceſſion, and of thoſe who compoſed it. It is ſufficient to obſerve, that proceſſional dancing conſtituted a conſiderable part of it. The Pirrhic dance, executed to a martial air, called the *Proceleumaticus*, employed the men of arms. Theſe were followed by perſons who danced and leaped, in the manner of Satirs, ſome of them in the dreſs aſcribed to *Silenus*, attended by performers on inſtruments adapted to

that character of dance. Theſe made the comic part of the proceſſion, and the perſons repreſenting Satirs, took care to divert the people by leaps, by a diſplay of agility, and by odd uncouth attitudes, ſuch as were in the character they had aſſumed. There were alſo in another part of the proceſſion twelve *Salii*, or prieſts of Mars, ſo called from their making ſacred dances in honor of that God, the moſt conſiderable part of their worſhip; theſe were headed by their maſter or *Præſul*, the leader of the dance, a term afterwards aſſumed by the Chriſtian Prelates. There were alſo the *Salian* virgins, beſides another diviſion of the *Salii* called *Agonenſes* or *Collini*.

Nor is the proceſſional dancing any thing ſurprizing; concerning that among the heathens, and even among the Hebrews,

Hebrews, they were greatly in uſe. Who does not know that David's dancing before the arch was but in conſequence of its being one of the religious ceremonies on that occaſion?

The heathens uſed eſpecially to form dances before their altars, and round the ſtatues of their gods. The *Salii*, or prieſts of Mars, whoſe dances were ſo framed as to give an idea of military exerciſe and activity, threw into their performance ſteps ſo expreſſive and majeſtic, as not only to defend their motions and geſtures from any idea of levity and burleſque, which it is ſo natural for the moderns to aſſociate with that of dancing, but even to inſpire the beholders with reſpect and a religious awe. The prieſts choſen for this function, were always perſons of the nobleſt aſpect, ſuitable to the dignity

of the ſacerdotal miniſtry. And ſo little needs that dignity of the heathen miniſtry be thought to be wounded or violated by the act of dancing, in religious worſhip, that dances were actually in uſe among the primitive Chriſtians, in their religious aſſemblies. There was a place in their churches, eſpecially allotted for theſe conſecrated dances, upon ſolemn feſtivals, which even gave the name of *choir* to thoſe parts of the church now only appropriated to the reading of the divine ſervice, and to ſinging. In Spain, it long remained an eſtabliſhed cuſtom for Chriſtians to aſſemble in the church-porches, where, in honor of God, they ſang ſacred himns, and to the tunes of them, performed dances, that were extremely pleaſing, for the decent and beautiful ſimplicity of the execution. All which I mention purely to ſalve that inconſiſtence,

ſiſtence, of the levity of dancing with the gravity of divine worſhip. An inconſiſtence of which the antients had no idea; ſince, on that occaſion, they almoſt conſtantly joined dancing to ſinging.

They are both natural expreſſions of joy and feſtivity; and as ſuch they thought neither of them improper in an addreſs of gratulation to the deity, whom they ſuppoſed rather pleaſed at ſuch innocent oblations of the heart, exulting in his manifold bounties and bleſſings.

From before the altar, among the heathens, the admiſſion of dances upon the theatre, was rather an extenſion of their power to entertain, than a total change of their deſtination; ſince the theatres themſelves were dedicated to the

the worſhip *of the heathen deities*, of which their making a part was one of the principal objections of the primitive Chriſtians to the theatres themſelves. However, it was from the theatres that dancing received its great and capital improvement.

As an exerciſe, the virtue of dancing was well known to the antients, for its keeping up the ſtrength and agility of the human body. There is a remark which I ſubmit to the conſideration of the reader, that it is not impoſſible but that the antient Romans, who were, generally ſpeaking, low in ſtature, and yet were eminently ſtrong, owed that advantage to their cultivation of bodily exerciſe. This kept their limbs ſupple, and rendered their conſtitution ſtout and hardy. Now, very laborious exerciſes would rather wear out the

the machine than they would invigorate it, if there was not a due relaxation, which ſhould not, however, be too abrupt a tranſition from the moſt fatiguing exerciſes to a ſtate of abſolute reſt. Whereas that dancing, of which they were ſo fond, afforded them, not only a pleaſing employ of vacant hours, but, withall, in its keeping up the pliability of their limbs, made them find more eaſe in the application of themſelves to more athletic, or to more violent exerciſes, either of war or of the chace: while all together bred that firmneſs of their muſcles, that robuſt compactneſs and vigor of body, which enabled them to atchieve that military valor, to which they owed all their conqueſts and their glory.

Certain it is then, that among the Romans, even in the moſt martial days of that

that republic, the art of dancing was taught, as one of the points of accompliſhment neceſſary to the education of youth; and was even practiſed among the exerciſes of the Circus. I need not obſerve, that there were alſo various abuſes of dancing, which they very juſtly accounted diſhonorable to thoſe who practiſed them, whether in public or private. Theſe, in the degenerate days of Rome, grew to an enormous exceſs. But I preſume no one will judge of an art by the abuſe that may be made of it.

OF

OF

DANCING

IN GENERAL.

THIS is one of the arts, in which, as in all the reſt, the ſtudy of nature is eſpecially to be recommended. She is an unerring guide. She gives that harmony, that power of pleaſing to the productions of thoſe who conſult her, which ſuch as neglect her muſt never expect. They will furniſh nothing but monſters and diſcordances; or, at the beſt, but ſometimes lucky hits, without meaning or connexion.

All the imitative arts acknowledge this principle.

In Poetry, a happy choice of the moſt proper words for expreſſing the ſentiments and images drawn from the obſervation of nature, conſtitutes the principal object of the poet.

In Painting, the diſpoſition of the ſubject, the reſemblance of the coloring to that of the original, in ſhort the greateſt poſſible adherence to nature, is the merit of that art.

In Muſic, that expreſſion of the paſſions which ſhould raiſe the ſame in the hearer, whether of joy, affliction, tenderneſs, or pity, can never have its effect without marking and adopting the reſpective ſounds of each paſſion as they are furniſhed by nature.

In

In Dancing, the attitudes, geſtures, and motions derive alſo their principle from nature, whether they caracteriſe joy, rage, or affection, in the bodily expreſſion reſpectively appropriated to the different affections of the ſoul. A conſideration this, which clearly proves the miſtake of thoſe, who imagine the art of dancing ſolely confined to the legs, or even arms; whereas the expreſſion of it ſhould be pantomimically diffuſed through the whole body, the face eſpecially included.

Monſieur Cahuſac, in his ingenious treatiſe on this art, has very juſtly obſerved, that both ſinging and dancing muſt have exiſted from the primeval times; that is to ſay, from the firſt of the exiſtence of human-kind itſelf.

" Obſerve, ſays he, the tender chil-
" dren, from their entry into the world,
" to the moment in which their reaſon
" unfolds itſelf, and you will ſee that
" it is primitive nature herſelf, that
" manifeſts herſelf in the ſound of
" their voice, in the features of their
" face, in their looks, in all their mo-
" tions. Mark their ſudden paleneſs,
" their quick contortions, their pierc-
" ing cries, when their ſoul is affected
" by a ſenſation of pain. Obſerve
" again, their engaging ſmile, their
" ſparkling eyes, their rapid motions,
" when it is moved by a ſentiment of
" pleaſure. You will then be clearly
" perſuaded of the principles of mu-
" ſic and dancing proceeding from the
" beginning of the world down to
" us."

Certain

Certain it is, that even in children, the motions and geſture, ſtrongly paint nature; and their infantine graces are not unworthy the remarks of an artiſt, who will be ſure to find excellence in no way more obtainable than by a rational ſtudy of her, where ſhe is the pureſt.

The cultivation of the natural graces, and a particular care to ſhun all affectation, all caricature, unleſs in comic or groteſque dances, cannot be too much recommended to thoſe who wiſh to make any figure in this art. It is doing a great injuſtice to it, to place its excellence in capers, in brilliant motions of the legs, or in the execution of difficult ſteps, without meaning or ſignificance, which require little more than ſtrength and agility.

I have already obſerved, that the Greeks, who were ſo famous for this art, as indeed for moſt others, which is no wonder, ſince all the arts have ſo acknowledged an affinity with each other, ſtudied eſpecially grace and dignity in the execution of their dances. That levity of capering, that nimbleneſs of the legs, which we ſo much admire, held no rank in their opinion. They were inconſiſtent with that clearneſs of expreſſion, and neatneſs of motion, of which they principally made a point. The great beauty of movements, or ſteps, is, for every one of them to be diſtinct; not huddled and running into one another, ſo as that one ſhould begin before the precedent one is finiſhed. This ſo neceſſary avoidance of puzzled or ambiguous motion, can only be compaſſed by an attention to ſignificance and juſtneſs of action.

action. This ſimplicity will ariſe from ſenſibility, from being actuated by feelings. No one has more than one predominant actual feeling at a time; when that is expreſſed clearly, the effect is as ſure as it is inſtantaneous. The movement it gives, neither interferes with the immediately precedent, nor the immediately following one, though it is prepared or introduced by the one, and prepares or introduces the other.

This the Greeks could the better effectuate, from their preference of the ſublime, or ſerious ſtile; which, having ſo much leſs of quickneſs or rapidity of execution, than the comic dance, admits of more attention to the neat expreſſiveneſs of every motion, geſture, attitude, or ſtep.

As

As to the great nicety of the Greeks, in the ordering and diſpoſing their dances, I refer to what I have before ſaid, for its being to be obſerved, how much at preſent this art is fallen ſhort of their perfection in it, and how difficult it muſt be for a compoſer of dances to produce them in that maſterly manner they were uſed to be performed among the antients. Let his talent for invention or compoſition be never ſo rich or fertile, it will be impoſſible for him to do it juſtice in the diſplay, unleſs he is ſeconded by performers well verſed in the art, and eſpecially expert in giving the expreſſion of their part in the dance; not to mention the collateral aids of muſic, machinery, and decoration, which it is ſo requiſite to adapt to the ſubject.

But

But where all theſe points ſo neceſſary are duly ſupplied, and dancing is executed in all its brilliancy, it would be no longer looked upon, eſpecially at the Opera, as merely an expletive between the acts, juſt to afford the ſingers a little breathing time. The dances might recover their former luſtre, and give the public the ſame pleaſure as to the Greeks and Romans, who made of them one of their moſt favorite entertainments, and carried them up to the higheſt pitch of taſte and excellence.

The Romans ſeem to have followed the Greeks, in this paſſion for dancing; and the theatrical dances, upon the pantomime plan, were in Rome puſhed to ſuch a degree of perfection as is even hard to conceive. Whole tragedies plaid, act by act, ſcene by ſcene, in pantomime expreſſion, give an idea of this

art, very different from that which is at preſent commonly received.

Every ſtep in dancing has its name and value. But not one ſhould be employed in a vague unmeaning manner. All the movements ſhould be conformable to the expreſſion required, and in harmony with one another. The ſteps regular, and properly varied, with a graceful ſuppleneſs in the limbs, a certain ſtrength, addreſs, and agility; juſt poſitions exhibited with eaſe, delicacy, and above all, with propriety, caracteriſe the maſterly dancer, and in their union, give to his execution its due beauty. The leaſt negligence in any of theſe points, is immediately felt, and detracts from the merit of the performance. Every ſtep or motion that is not natural, or has any thing of ſtiffneſs, conſtraint, or affectation, is inſtinctively perceived

ceived by the ſpectator. The body muſt conſtantly preſerve its proper poſition, without the leaſt contortion, well adjuſted to the ſteps; while the motion of the arms, muſt be agreeable to that of the legs, and the head to be in concert with the whole.

But in this obſervation I pretend to no more than juſt furniſhing a general idea of the requiſites towards the execution: the particulars, it is impoſſible, to give in verbal deſcription, or even by choregraphy or dances in ſcore.

Many who pretend to underſtand the art of dancing, confound motions of ſtrength, with thoſe of agility, miſtaking ſtrength for ſlight, or ſlight for ſtrength; tho' ſo different in their nature. It is the ſpring of the body, in harmony with ſenſe, that gives the great power

to pleaſe and ſurprize. The ſame it is with the management of the arms; but all this requires both the theory of the art, and the practice of it. One will hardly ſuffice without the other; which makes excellence in it ſo rare.

The motion of the arms is as eſſential, at leaſt, as that of the legs, for an expreſſive attitude: and both receive their juſtneſs from the nature of the paſſions they are meant to expreſs. The paſſions are the ſprings which muſt actuate the machine, while a cloſe obſervation of nature furniſhes the art of giving to thoſe motions the grace of eaſe and expertneſs. Any thing that, on the ſtage eſpecially, has the air of being forced, or improper, cannot fail of having a bad effect. A frivolous, affected turn of the wriſt, is ſurely no grace.

One

One of the moſt nice and difficult points of the art of dancing is, certainly, the management and diſplay of the arms; the adapting their motion to the character of the dance. In this many are too arbitrary in forming rules to themſelves, without conſulting nature, which would not fail of ſuggeſting to them the juſteſt movements. For want of this appropriation of geſture and attitude, the movements fit for one character are indiſtinctly employed in the repreſentation of another. And into this error thoſe will be ſure to fall, who deviate from the unerring principles of nature; which has for every character an appropriate ſtrain of motion and geſture.

Nothing then has a worſe effect, than any impropriety in the management of the arms: it gives to the eye, the

the ſame pain that diſcordance in muſic does to the ear.

There are ſome who move their arms with a tolerably natural grace, without knowing the true rules riſing out of nature into art: but where the advantage of theory gives yet a greater ſecurity, conſequently a greater eaſe and a nobler freedom to the motions of the performer; the performance cannot but meet with fuller approbation. And yet it may be as bad to ſhow too much art, as to have too little. The point is to employ no more of art than juſt what ſerves to grace nature, but never to hide or obſcure her.

Great is the difference between the antient and the modern dances. The antient ones were full of ſublime ſimplicity. But that ſimplicity was far from

from excluding the delicate, the graceful, and even the brilliant. The moderns are ſo accuſtomed to thoſe dances from which nature is baniſhed, and falſe refinements ſubſtituted in her room, that it is to be queſtioned whether they would reliſh the returning in practice to the purer principles of the art. Myſelf knowing better, and ſenſible that the principles of nature are the only true ones, have been ſometimes forced to yield to the torrent of faſhion, and to adopt in practice thoſe floriſhings of art, which in theory I deſpiſed; and juſtly, for ſurely the plaineſt imitation of nature muſt be the grounds from which alone the performance can be carried up to any degree of excellence. It is with our art, as in architecture, if the foundation is not right, the ſuperſtructure will be wrong.

This

This primitive ſource then muſt be ſtudied, known, and well attended to; or we only follow the art blindly, and without certainty. Thence the common indifference of ſo many performers, who mind nothing more than a rote of the art, without tracing it to its origin, nature.

To ſucceed, we muſt abandon the falſe taſte, and embrace the true; which is not only the beſt guide to perfection; but when rendered familiar, by much the moſt eaſy and the moſt delightful. It has all the advantages that truth has over falſhood.

The greater the ſimplicity of ſteps in a dance, the more beautiful it is; and requires the more attention in the performer to exactneſs and delicacy; for ſlowneſs and neatneſs being in the character

character of ſimplicity, afford the ſpectator both leiſure and diſtinctneſs for his examination: whereas dances of intricate evolutions, or quick motions, in their confuſion and hurry, allow no clearneſs, or time for particular obſervation.

If the merit of a theatrical dancer were to conſiſt, as many imagine, in nothing but in the motions of the legs, in cutting lively or brilliant capers, in ſurprizing ſteps, in the agility of the body, in vigorous ſprings, in vaulting, in a tolerable management of the arms, and eſpecially in being well acquainted with thoſe parts of the ſtage where the perſpective gives him the greateſt advantage; the art of dancing might be, as it is generally looked upon to be, an art eaſily acquired. Whereas, for the attaining to a juſt perfection in it, there

are many other points required, but none ſo much as the cloſe imitation of beautiful nature; and that eſpecially in its greateſt ſimplicity.

Nor ſhould it be imagined that the ſimplicity I recommend, tends to ſave the compoſer of dances any trouble of invention: on the contrary, that ſort of ſimplicity of execution intended to produce, by means of its adherence to nature, the greateſt effect, will coſt him more pains, more exertion of genius, than thoſe dances of which the falſe brilliants of extravagant decoration, and of mere agility without meaning or expreſſion, conſtitute the merit. It is with the compoſition of dances, as with that of muſic, the plaineſt and the moſt ſtriking, are ever the moſt difficult to the compoſer.

The

The comic, or grotteſque dancers, indeed are in poſſeſſion of a branch of this art, in which they are diſpenſed from exhibiting the ſerious or pathetic; however, they may be otherwiſe as well acquainted with the fundamental principles of the art, as the beſt maſters. But as their ſucceſs depends chiefly on awakening the riſible faculty, they commonly chuſe to throw their whole powers of execution into thoſe motions, geſtures, grimaces, and contortions, which are fitteſt to give pleaſure by the raiſing a laugh. And certainly this has its merit; but in no other proportion to the truth of the art, which conſiſts in moving the nobler paſſions, than as farce is to tragedy or to genteel comedy. They are in this art of dancing, what Hemſkirk and Teniers are in that of painting.

The painter, can only in his draught preſent one ſingle unvaried attitude in each perſonage that he paints: but it is the duty of the dancer, to give, in his own perſon, a ſucceſſion of attitudes, all like thoſe of the painter, taken from nature.

Thus a painter who ſhould paint Oreſtes agitated by the furies, can only give him one ſingle expreſſion of his countenance and poſture: but a dancer, charged with the repreſentation of that character, can, ſeconded by a well-adapted muſic, execute a ſucceſſion of motions and attitudes, that will more ſtrongly and ſurely with more livelineſs, convey the idea of that character, with all its tranſports of fury and diſorder.

It was in this light, that the antients required the union of the actor and of the dancer in the ſame perſon. They expected, on the theatre eſpecially, dances of character, that ſhould expreſs to the eye the ſenſations of the ſoul: without which, they conſidered it as nothing but an art that had left nature behind it; a mere corpſe without the animating ſpirit; or at the beſt, carrying with it a character of falſity or taſteleſſneſs. A thorough maſter of dancing, ſhould, in every motion of every limb, convey ſome meaning; or rather be all expreſſion or pantomime, to his very fingers ends.

How many requiſites muſt concur to form an accompliſhed poſſeſſion of this talent! It is not enough that the head ſhould play on the ſhoulders with all the grace of a fine connection; nor that

that his countenance ſhould be enlivened with ſignificance and expreſſion; that his eyes ſhould give forth the juſt language of the paſſions belonging to the character he repreſents; that his ſhoulders have the eaſy fall they ought to have; let even the motions of his arms be true; let his elbows and wriſts have that delicate turn of which the grace is ſo ſenſible; let the movement of the whole perſon be free, genteel, and eaſy; let the attitudes of the bending turn be agreeable; his cheſt be neither too full nor too narrow; his ſides clean made, ſtrong, and well turned; his knees well articulated, and ſupple; his legs neither too large, nor too ſmall, but finely formed; his inſtep furniſhed with the ſtrength neceſſary to execute and maintain the ſprings he makes; his feet in juſt proportion to the ſupport of the whole frame; all

theſe

theſe, accompanied with a regularity of motion; and yet all theſe, however eſſential, conſtitute but a ſmall part of the talent. Towards the perfection of it, there is yet more, much more required, in that ſenſibility of ſoul, which has in it ſo much more of the gift of nature, than of the acquiſition of art; and is perhaps in this, what it is in moſt other arts and ſciences, if not genius itſelf, an indiſpenſable foundation of genius. There is no executing well with the body, what is not duly felt by the ſoul: ſentiment gives life to the execution, and propriety to the looks, motions and geſtures.

Thoſe who would make any conſiderable progreſs in this art, ſhould, above all things, ſtudy juſtneſs of action. They cannot therefore too cloſely attend to the repreſentation of nature, either

either upon the ſtage, or in life. I cannot too often repeat it; thoſe who keep moſt the great original, Nature, in view, will ever be the greateſt maſters of this art.

As to the different characters of dances, there are, properly ſpeaking, four diviſions of the characters of dances: the ſerious, the half ſerious, the comic, and the grotteſque; but for executing any of them with grace, the artiſt ſhould be well grounded in the principles of the ſerious dance, which will give him what may be called a delicacy of manner in all the reſt.

But as one of theſe diviſions may be more adapted to the humor, genius, or powers of an artiſt, than another, he ſhould, if he aims at excellence, examine carefully for which it is that he is the moſt fit.

After

After determining which, whatever imperfections he may have from nature, he muſt ſet about correcting, as well as he can, by art. Nothing will hardly be found impoſſible for him to ſubdue, by an unſhaken reſolution, and an intenſe application.

Happy indeed is that artiſt, in whom both the requiſites of nature and art are united: but where the firſt is not groſsly deficient, it may be ſupplemented by the ſecond. However well a beginner may be qualified for this profeſſion by nature, if he does not cultivate the talent duly, he will be ſurpaſſed by another, inferior to him in natural endowments, but who ſhall have taken pains to acquire what was wanting to him, or to improve where

deficient. The experience of all ages atteſts this.

The helps of a lively imagination, joined to great and aſſiduous practice, carry the art to the higheſt perfection. But practice will give no eminent diſtinction without ſtudy. Whoever ſhall flatter himſelf with forming himſelf by practice alone, without the true principles and ſufficient grounds of the art, can only proceed upon a rote of tradition, which may appear infallible to him. But this adoption of unexamined rules, and this plodding on in a beaten track, will never lead to any thing great or eminent. It carries with it always ſomething of the ſtiffneſs of a copy, without any thing of the graceful boldneſs of originality, or of the ſtrokes of genius.

Vanity

Vanity ſhould never miſlead a man in the judgment he forms of his own talents: much leſs ſhould an artiſt reſort to the meanneſs of depending in the ſupport of cabals: it muſt be the general approbation that muſt ſeal his patent of merit.

I have before obſerved that the grave or ſerious ſtile of dancing, is the great ground-work of the art. It is alſo the moſt difficult. Firmneſs of ſtep, a graceful and regular motion of all the parts, ſuppleneſs, eaſy bendings and riſings, the whole accompanied with a good air, and managed with the greateſt eaſe of expertneſs and dexterity, conſtitute the merit of this kind of dancing. The ſoul itſelf ſhould be ſeen in every motion of the body, and expreſs ſomething naturally noble, and even

heroic. Every ſtep ſhould have its beauty.

The painter draws, or ought to draw his copy, the actor his action, and the ſtatuary his model, all from the truth of nature. They are all reſpectively profeſſors of imitative arts; and the dancer may well preſume to take rank among them, ſince the imitation of nature is not leſs his duty than theirs; with this difference, that they have ſome advantages of which the dancer is deſtitute. The Painter has time to ſettle and correct his attitudes, but the dancer muſt be exactly bound to the time of the muſic. The actor has the aſſiſtance of ſpeech, and the ſtatuary has all the time requiſite to model his work. The dancer's effect is not only that of a moment, but he muſt every moment repreſent a ſucceſſion of motions and attitudes,

attitudes, adapted to his character, whether his ſubject be heroic or paſtoral, or in whatever kind of dancing he exhibits himſelf. He is by the expreſſiveneſs of his dumb ſhow to ſupplement the want of ſpeech, and that with clearneſs; that whatever he aims at repreſenting may be inſtantaneouſly apprehended by the ſpectator, who muſt not be perplexed with hammering out to himſelf the meaning of one ſtep, while the dancer ſhall have already begun another.

In the half-ſerious ſtile we obſerve vigor, lightneſs, agility, brilliant ſprings, with a ſteadineſs and command of the body. It is the beſt kind of dancing for expreſſing the more general theatrical ſubjects. It alſo pleaſes more generally.

The

The grand pathetic of the ſerious ſtile of dancing is not what every one enters into. But all are pleaſed with a brilliant execution, in the quick motion of the legs, and the high ſprings of the body. A paſtoral dance, repreſented in all the pantomime art, will be commonly preferred to the more ſerious ſtile, though this laſt requires doubtleſs the greateſt excellence: but it is an excellence of which few but the connoiſſeurs are judges; who are rarely numerous enough to encourage the compoſer of dances to form them entirely in that ſtile. All that he can do is to take a great part of his attitudes from the ſerious ſtile, but to give them another turn and air in the compoſition; that he may avoid confounding the two different ſtiles of ſerious and half-ſerious. For this laſt,

it

it is impoſſible to have too much agility and briſkneſs.

The comic dancer is not tied up to the ſame rules or obſervations as are neceſſary to the ſerious and half ſerious ſtiles. He is not ſo much obliged to ſtudy what may be called nature in high life. The rural ſports, and exerciſes; the geſtures of various mechanics or artificers will ſupply him with ideas for the execution of characters in this branch. The more his motions, ſteps, and attitudes are taken from nature, the more they will be ſure to pleaſe.

The comic dance has for object the exciting mirth; whereas, on the contrary, the ſerious ſtile aims more at ſoothing and captivating by the harmony and juſtneſs of its movements; by

by the grace and dignity of its ſteps; by the pathos of the execution.

The comic ſtile, however its aim may be laughter, requires taſte, delicacy, and invention; and that the mirth it creates ſhould not even be without wit. This depends not only upon the execution, but on the choice of the ſubject. It is not enough to value oneſelf upon a cloſe imitation of nature, if the ſubject choſen for imitation is not worth imitating, or improper to repreſent; that is to ſay, either trivial, indifferent, conſequently unintereſting; or diſguſtful and unpleaſing. The one tires, the other ſhocks. Even in the loweſt claſſes of life, the compoſer muſt ſeize only what is the fitteſt to give ſatisfaction; and omit whatever can excite diſagreeable ideas. It is from the animal joy of mechanics

chanics or peaſants in their ceſſations from labor, or from their celebration of feſtivals, that the artiſt will ſelect his matter of compoſition; not from any circumſtances of unjoyous poverty or loathſome diſtreſs. He muſt cull the flowers of life, not preſent the roots with the ſoil and dirt ſticking to them.

Even contraſting characters, which are ſo ſeldom attempted on the ſtage, in theatrical dances, might not have a bad effect; whereas moſt of the figures in them are ſimmetrically coupled. Of the firſt I once ſaw in Germany a ſtriking inſtance; an inſtance that ſerved to confirm that affinity between the arts which renders them ſo ſerviceable to one another.

Paſſing through the Electorate of Cologne, I obſerved a number of perſons of all ages, aſſembled on a convenient ſpot, and diſpoſed, in couples, in order for dancing; but ſo odly paired that the moſt ugly old man, had for his partner the moſt beautiful and youngeſt girl in the company, while, on the contrary, the moſt decrepid, deformed old woman, was led by the moſt handſome and vigorous youth. Inquiring the reaſon of ſo ſtrange a groupe of figures, I was told that it was the humor of an eminent painter, who was preparing a picture for the gallery at Duſſeldorp, the ſubject of which was to be this contraſt; and that in order to take his draught from nature, he had given a treat to this ruſtic company, in the deſign of exhibiting at one view, the floridneſs of youth contraſted to the weakneſs and infirmities of old age, in a moral

moral light, of expoſing the impropriety of thoſe matches, in which the objection of a diſparity of years ſhould not be duly reſpected.

I have mentioned this purely to point out a new reſource of invention, that may throw a pleaſing variety into the compoſition of dances; and ſave them from too conſtant a ſimmetry, or uniformity, either of dreſs or figure, in the pairing the dancers: by which I am as far from meaning that that ſimmetry ſhould be always neglected, as that it ſhould be always obſerved.

The comic dance, having then the diverſion of the ſpectator, in the way of laughing, for its object, ſhould preſerve a moderately buffoon ſimplicity, and the dancer, aided by a natural genius, but eſpecially by throwing as

much nature as poſſible into his execution, may promiſe himſelf to amuſe and pleaſe the ſpectator; even though he ſhould not be very deep in the grounds of his art; provided he has a good ear, and ſome pretty or brilliant ſteps to vary the dance. The ſpectators require no more.

As to the groteſque ſtile of dance, the effect of it chiefly depends on the leaps and height of the ſprings. There is more of bodily ſtrength required in it than even of agility and ſlight. It is more calculated to ſurprize the eye, then to entertain it. It has ſomething of the tumbler's, or wire-dancer's merit of difficulty and danger, rather than of art. But the worſt of it is, that this vigor and agility laſt no longer than the ſeaſon of youth, or rather decreaſe in proportion as age advances, and, by this means

means, leave thoſe who have truſted ſolely to that vigor and agility deprived of their eſſential merit. Whereas ſuch as ſhall have joined to that vigor and agility, a proper ſtudy of the principles of their art; that talent will ſtill remain as a reſource for them. Commonly thoſe dancers who have from nature eminently thoſe gifts which enable them to ſhine in the grotteſque branch, do not chuſe to give themſelves the trouble of going to the bottom of their art, and acquiring its perfection. Content with their bodily powers, and with the applauſe their performances actually do receive from the public, they look no further, and remain in ignorance of the reſt of their duty. Againſt this diſſipation then, which keeps them always ſuperficial, they

they cannot be too much, for their own advantage, admoniſhed.

They will not otherwiſe get at the truth of their art, like him who qualifies himſelf for making a figure in the ſerious, and half-ſerious ſtiles, which alſo contribute to diffuſe a grace over every other kind of dancing, however different from them.

But though the groteſque may be a caricature of nature, it is never to loſe ſight of it. It muſt ever bear a due relation to the objects of which it attempts to exhibit the imitation, however exagerated. But in this it is for genius to direct the artiſt. And it is very certain that this kind of dancing, well executed, affords to the public, great entertainment in the way, if what

what may be called broad mirth; eſpecially where the figure of the groteſque dancer, his geſtures, dreſs, and the decorations, all contribute to the creation of the laugh. He muſt alſo avoid any thing ſtudied or affected in his action. Every thing muſt appear as natural as poſſible, even amidſt the grimaces, contortions, and extravagancies of the character.

OF

OF

SUNDRY REQUISITES,

FOR

PERFECTION OF THE

ART

OF

DANCING.

I HAVE already obſerved how neceſſary it is that all the ſteps, in the theatrical dances, which have imitation for their object, ſhould be intelligible at the firſt glance of the eye.

This cannot be too much inculcated. The paſſions and manners of mankind, have all a different expreſſion, which cannot be preſented too plain, and too obvious. The adjuſtment of the motions to the character muſt be obſerved through every ſtile of dancing, the ſerious, the half-ſerious, the comic, and the groteſque. The various beauties of theſe different kinds of dances, all center in the propriety or truth of nature. Looks, movements, attitudes, geſtures, ſhould in the dancer, all have an appropriate meaning; ſo plainly expreſſed as to be inſtantaneouſly underſtood by the ſpectator, without giving him the trouble of unriddling them: otherwiſe, it is like talking to them in a foreign language for which an interpretor is needed.

But

But to give a ſentiment, a man muſt have it firſt: where a pathetic ſentiment is well poſſeſſed of the mind, the expreſſion of it is diffuſed over the whole body.

The theatre ſhows to advantage a well proportioned dancer. A tall perſon appears the more majeſtic on it; but thoſe of a middling ſtature are more generally fit for every character; and may make up in gracefulneſs what they want in ſize. The remarkably tall commonly want the graces to be ſeen in thoſe of the more general ſtandard.

A young dancer who diſplays a dawn of genius, cannot be too much exhorted to deliver himſelf up to the power of nature; ſo that acquiring a particular manner of his own, he may himſelf proceed on original. If he would hope

to arrive at any eminence in the art, he muſt break the ſhackles of a ſervile imitation, and preſerve nothing but the principles and grounds of his art, which will be ſo far from fettering him, that they will aſſiſt his ſoaring upon the wings of his own genius.

Where a dancer undertakes to repreſent a ſubject on the theatre, he muſt ground his plan of performance on the ſelecting all the moſt proper ſituations for furniſhing the moſt ſtrikingly pictures, proſpects, and conſequently, producing the greateſt effect.

This was doubtleſs the great ſecret of Pilades, the founder, at leaſt in Rome, of the pantomime art. It was on this choice of ſituations, that the under-

underſtanding whole pieces, both tragic and comic, executed in dances, entirely depends.

And here, upon mentioning the pantomime art, be it allowed me to defend it againſt the objections made to it, by thoſe who conſider it only under a partial or vulgar point of view.

If any one ſhould pretend that the pantomime art is ſuperior to the actor's power of repreſentation in tragedy or comedy, or that ſuch an entertainment of dumb ſhow ought to exclude that of ſpeaking characters; nothing could be more ridiculous or abſurd than ſuch a propoſition.

That indeed would be rejecting one of the moſt noble improvements of nature, in favor of an art rather calculated

culated for the relaxation of the mind than for the inſtruction of it; in which it can only claim a ſubordinate ſhare.

Thoſe ſubjects, whether ſerious or comic, which are executed by dances, or in the pantomime ſtrain, are chiefly intended for the throwing a variety into theatrical entertainments, without diſputing any honors of rank.

The very ſame perſon who ſhall have at one time, taken pleaſure in ſeeing and hearing the noble and pathetic ſentiments of tragedy, or the ridicule of human follies in a good comedy, finely repreſented, may, without any ſort of inconſiſtence, not be diſpleaſed at ſeeing, at another time, a ſubject executed in dances, while the muſic, the decorations, all contribute to the happy diverſification of his entertainment.

ment. Ought he therefore either to call his own taſte to an account for his being pleaſed, or to grudge to others a pleaſure, which nature itſelf juſtifies, in his having given to mankind a love of variety?

Nor is there perhaps, in the world, an art more the genuine offspring of Nature, more under her immediate command, than the art of dancing. For to ſay nothing of that dancing, which has no relation to the theatre, and which is her principal demonſtrations of joy and feſtivity, the theatrical branch acknowledges her for its great and capital guide. All the motions, all the geſtures, all the attitudes, all the looks, can have no merit, but in their faithful imitation of Nature: while man himſelf, man, the nobleſt of her productions, is ever the ſubject which the

dancer

dancer paints through all his paſſions and manners.

The painter preſents man in one fixed attitude, with no more of life than the draught and colors can give to his figure: the dancer exhibits him in a ſucceſſion of attitudes, and, inſtead of painting with the bruſh, paints, ſurely more to the life, with his own perſon. A dance in action, is not only a moving picture, but an animated one: while to the eloquence of the tongue, it ſubſtitutes that of the whole body.

The art, viewed in this light, ſhows how comparatively little the merely mechanical part of it, the agility of the legs and body, contributes to the accompliſhment of the dancer; however neceſſary that alſo is. We might ſoon form a dancer, if the art conſiſted only in his being taught

to ſhake his legs in cadence, to ballance his body, or to move his arms unmeaningly. But if he has not a genius, ſuſceptible of cultivation, and which is itſelf far the moſt eſſential gift, he will make no progreſs towards the deſirable diſtinction: he is a body without a ſoul: his performance will have more of the poppet moved by wires, than of the actor giving that life to the character, which himſelf receives from the ſenſibility of genius.

There are many young beginners, who, looking on this art as a good way of livelihood, enter on the rudiments of it, with great ardor. But this ardor ſoon abates, in proportion, as they advance, and find there is more ſtudy and pains required from them than they expected to find, towards their arrival at any tolerable degree of

perfection. Having conſidered this art as purely a mechanical one, they are ſurpriſed at the diſcovery of its exacting thought and reflection, for which their ideas of it had not prepared them. A man who has not ſufficient ſhare of genius to attempt the vanquiſhing theſe difficulties, of which, in his falſe conception of things, he has formed to himſelf no notion; either treats theſe great eſſentials of the art, as innovations, and ſuch as he is not bound to admit, or in the deſpair of acquiring them, ſits down contented with his mediocrity. It is well if he does not rail at, or attempt to turn into ridicule, perfections which are beyond his reach. And to ſay the truth, the art has not greater enemies than thoſe profeſſors of it, who ſtick at the ſurface, and want the ſpirit neceſſary to go to the bottom of it. In vain does the public refuſe its applauſe

to

to their indifferent, ordinary, unintereſting performance: rather than allow the fault to be in themſelves, their vanity will lay it on the public: they never refuſe themſelves that approbation which others can ſee no reaſon for beſtowing on them. They are perfectly ſatisfied with having executed in their little manner, the little they know or are capable of; they have no idea of any thing beyond their ſhort reach.

Certainly the beſt ſeaſon of life, for the ſtudy of this art, is, as for that of moſt others, for obvious reaſons, the time of one's youth. It is the beſt time of laying the foundation both of theory and practice.

But the theory ſhould eſpecially be attended to, without however neglecting the practice. For though a dancer, by an aſſiduous practice, may, at

the firſt unexamining glance, appear as well in the eyes of the public, as he who poſſeſſes the rules; the illuſion will not be laſting; it will ſoon be diſſipated, eſpecially where there is preſent an object of compariſon. He whoſe motions are dirrected only by rote and cuſtom, will ſoon be diſcovered eſſentially inferior to him whoſe practice is governed by a knowledge of the principles of his art.

A maſter does not do his duty by his pupil, in this art, if he fails of ſtrongly inculcating to him the neceſſity of ſtudying thoſe principles; and of kindling in him that ardor for attaining to excellence, which if it is not itſelf genius, it is certain that no genius will do much without it.

Invention is alſo as much a requiſite in our art as in any other. But to ſave the pains of ſtudy, we often borrow and copy from one another. Indolence is the bane of our art. The trouble of thinking neceſſary to the invention and compoſition of dances, appears to many too great a fatigue: this engages them to appropriate to themſelves the fruits of other peoples invention; and they appear to themſelves well provided at a ſmall expence, when they have made free with the productions of others. Some again, inſtead of cultivating their talent, chuſe indolently to follow the great torrent of the faſhion, and ſtick to the old tracks, without daring to ſtrike out any thing new, ſo that their prejudices are, in fact, the principles by which they are governed, and which ſometimes ſerves them for their excuſe; ſince they know better,

better, but do not care to give themſelves the trouble of acting up to their knowledge. Thus they plod on in the ſafe, and broad road of mediocrity, but without any reputation or name. They are neither envied nor applauded.

As for thoſe who borrow from others, content with being copies, when they ought to ſtrive to be originals; nothing can more obſtruct their progreſs in the diſcoveries of the depths of their art, than this ſcheme of ſubſiſting on the merit of others.

Many, beſides thoſe who are incapable of invention, are tempted at once by their indolence, and by the hope of not being diſcovered or minded in their borrowing from others, to give ſtale or hackneyed compoſitions, which having ſeen in one country, they

flatter

flatter themſelves they may palm for new and original upon the public in another. Thence it is that the audience is cloyed with repetitions of pantomime dances; perhaps ſome of them very pretty at their firſt appearance, but which cannot fail of tiring when too often repeated; or when the ſame grounds or ſubject of action is only ſuperficially or ſlightly diverſified.

It is this barrenneſs of invention that the ingenious Goldoni has ſo well expoſed in one of his plays, in the following ſpeech, addreſſed to a young man.

" * For example, you, as the female dancer;

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* Per eſempio vendra fora la ballerina, colla rocca, filando, ò con un ſecchio à

" dancer will come upon the ſtage,
" with a diſtaff, twirling it, or with a
" a pail to draw water; or with a
ſpade

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trar l'acqua, ò con una zappa à zappar. El voſtro compagno vendra fora ò colla cariola à portar qualche coſa, ò colla falce à tagliar il grano, ò colla pipa a fumar, e ſi ben, che la ſcena foſſe una ſala, tanto e tanto, ſe vien a far da contadini ò da marinari. El voſtro compagno non vi vedra: voi andarete a cercarlo, e el vi ſcacciera via. Gli batterete una man ſu la ſpalla, ed el con un ſalto anderà dall'altra banda. Voigli correrete dietro, lui ſe ſcampera, e voi anderete in collera. Quando voi ſarete in collera, a lui le vendra la voglia di far pace, e lui vi preghera, voi lo ſcacciarete. Scamparete via, e lui vi correra dietro. El ſe inginocchiera, farete pace, voi, menando I pedini, l'invitarete a ballar: anche ello, menando I piedi, a ſegni dira, " balliamo," e tirandovi indietro allegramente comincia-

" ſpade for digging. Your companion
" will come next perhaps driving a
" wheel-barrow, or with a ſickle to mow
" corn, or with a pipe a-ſmoaking; and
" though the ſcene ſhould be a ſaloon,
" no matter, it will come ſoon to be
" filled

N

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rete el *Pas-de-deux*. La prima parte allegra, la ſegonda grave, la terza una giga. Procurarete di cacciargli dentro ſei o ſette delle migliori arie di ballo che ſ'abbiano ſentito; farete tutti i paſſi che ſapete fare, e che ſia il *Pas-de-deux* o da paeſana, o da giardinera, o da Granatiera, o da ſtatue, i paſſi ſaranno ſempre gli iſteſſi, correrſe dietro, ſcampar, pianger, andar in collera, far pace, tirar i bracci ſopra la teſta, ſaltar in tempo e fora di tempo, menar gli bracci, e le gambe, e la teſta, e la vita, e le ſpalle, e ſopra tutto rider ſempre col popolo, e ſtorcer un pochetto il collo quando ſi paſſa proſſimo i lumi, e fare delle belle ſmorfie all udienza, e una bella riverenza in ultima.

" filled with ruſtics or ſailors. Your " companion to be ſure will not have " ſeen you, at firſt; that is the rule; " upon which you will make up to him, " and he will ſend you a packing. You " will tap him on the ſhoulder with one " hand, and he will give a ſpring from you " to the other ſide of the ſtage. You will " run after him; he, on his part will " ſcamper away from you, and you " will take pet at it. When he ſees " you angry, he will take it into his " head to make peace; he will ſue " to you, and you in your turn will " ſend him about his buſineſs. You " will run from him, and he after " you. He will be down on his knees " to you; peace will be made; then, " ſhaking your footſies, you will invite " him to dance. He alſo will anſwer " you with his feet, as much as to ſay, " come, let us dance."

" There

" Then handing you backwards to
" the top of the ſtage, you will begin
" gaily a *Pas-de-deux*, or Duet dance.
" The firſt part will be lively, the ſe-
" cond grave, the third a jig. You will
" have taken care to procure ſix or ſeven
" of the beſt airs for a dance, put to-
" gether, that can be imagined. You
" will execute all the ſteps that you are
" miſtreſs of; and let your character in
" the Pas-de-deux, be that of a country
" wench, a gardener's ſervant, a grana-
" dier's trull, or a ſtatue; the ſteps
" will be always the ſame; and the
" ſame actions for ever repeated; ſuch
" as running after one another, dodg-
" ing, crying, falling in a paſſion,
" making peace again, bringing the
" arms over the head, jumping in and
" out of time, ſhaking legs and arms,
" the head, the body, the ſhoulders,
" and eſpecially ſmirking and ogling

" round you; not forgetting gentle in-
" flexions of the neck, as you paſs cloſe
" under the lights, nor to make pretty
" faces to the audience, and then, hey
" for a fine curteſy at the end of the
" dance!"

Nothing however would more obſtruct the progreſs of this art, than thus contenting one ſelf with adopting the productions of others. It even would, in the diſguſt which repetition occaſions, bring on the decline of this entertainment, in the opinion of a public which is always fond of novelty.

And of novelty, the beauties of nature furniſh an inexhauſtible fund, in their infinite variety. Among theſe it is the buſineſs of the artiſt to chuſe ſuch as can be brought upon the

the ſcene, and theatrically adapted to the execution of his art. But for this he muſt be poſſeſſed of taſte, which is a qualification as neceſſary to him, as a compoſer, as that of the graces are to him as a performer. Both are gifts. But if a due exerciſe of the art can add to the natural graces, taſte does not ſtand leſs in need of cultivation: it refines itſelf by a judicious obſervation of the beauties and delicacies of nature. Theſe he muſt inceſſantly ſtudy, in order to tranſplant into his art ſuch as are capable of producing the moſt pleaſing effect. He muſt particularly conſult the fitneſs of time, place and manners; otherwiſe what would pleaſe in one dance might diſpleaſe in another. Propriety is the great rule of this art, as of all others. A diſcordance in muſic hurts a nice ear; a falſe attitude or motion in dancing equally offends the judicious eye. The

The looks of the dancer are far from inſignificant to the character he is repreſenting. Their expreſſion ſhould be ſtrictly conformable to his ſubject. The eye eſpecially ſhould ſpeak. Thence it is that the Italian cuſtom of dancing with uncovered faces, cannot but be more advantageous than that of dancing maſked, as is commonly done in France; when the paſſions can never be ſo well repreſented as by the changes of expreſſion, which the dancer ſhould throw into his countenance.

And it is by theſe changes of countenance, as well as of attitude and geſture, that the dancer can expreſs the gradations of the paſſions; whereas the painter is confined intirely to one paſſion, that of the particular moment in which he will have choſen

to

to draw a character. For example, a painter, who means to repreſent a country-maid, under the influence of the paſſion of love, can only aim at expreſſing ſome particular degree of that paſſion, ſuitable to the circumſtances of the reſt of his picture, or to the ſituation in which he ſhall have placed her. But a dancer may ſucceſſively repreſent all the gradations of love; ſuch as ſurprize at firſt ſight, admiration, timidity, perplexity, agitation, languor, deſire, ardor, eagerneſs, impatience, tumultous tranſports, with all the external ſimptoms of that paſſion. All theſe may be executed in the moſt lively manner, in time and cadence, to a correſpondent muſic or ſimphany. And ſo of all the other paſſions, whether of fear, revenge, joy, hatred, which have all their ſubdiviſions expreſſible, by the quick ſhift and ſucceſſion

ceſſion of ſteps, geſtures, attitudes, and looks, reſpectively adapted to each gradation.

A maſk then cannot but hide a great part of the neceſſary expreſſion, or juſtneſs of action. It can only be favorable to thoſe who have contracted ill habits of grimacing or of contortions of the face while they perform.

There are however ſome characters in which a maſk is even neceſſary: but then great care ſhould be taken to model and fit it as exactly as poſſible to the face, as well as to have it perfectly natural to the character repreſented. The French are particularly, and not without reaſon, curious in this point.

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The female dancers have naturally a greater eaſe of expreſſion than the men. More pliable in their limbs, with more ſenſibility in the delicacy of their frame; all their motions and actions are more tenderly pathetic, more intereſting than in our ſex. We are beſides prepoſſeſſed in their favor, and leſs diſpoſed to remark or cavil at their faults. While on the other hand, that ſo natural deſire they have of pleaſing, independently of their profeſſion, makes them ſtudiouſly avoid any motion or geſture that might be diſagreeable, and conſequently any contortion of the face. They, inſtinctively then, one may ſay, make a point of the moſt graceful expreſſion.

A woman, who ſhould only depend on the exertion of ſtrength in her legs or limbs, without attention to ex-

preſſion, would poſſeſs but a very defective talent. Such an one might ſurprize the public, by the maſculine vigor of her ſprings; but ſhould ſhe attempt to execute a dance, where tender expreſſions are requiſite, ſhe would certainly fail of pleaſing.

The female dancers have alſo an advantage over the men, in that the petticoat can conceal many defects in their execution; even, if the indulgence due to that amiable ſex, did not only make great allowances, but give to the leaſt agreeable ſteps in them, the power of obtaining applauſe.

At the Italian theatres at Rome, in the Carnaval, where the female dancers are not ſuffered to perform the dances, and where the parts of the women are perform'd by men in the dreſſes of women,

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it appears plainly, how much the execution ſuffers by this expedient. However well they may be diſguiſed, there is an inherent clumſineſs in them, which it is impoſſible for them to ſhake off, ſo as to repreſent with juſtneſs the ſprightly graces and delicacy of the female ſex. The very idea of ſeeing men effeminated by ſuch a dreſs, invincibly diſguſts. An effeminate man appears even worſe than a maſculine woman.

But however the conſulting a looking-glaſs gives to men, in general, the air of fops or coxcombs; it is to thoſe who would make a figure in dancing a point of neceſſity. A glaſs is to them, what reflexion is to a thinking perſon; it ſerves to make them acquainted with their defects, and to correct them. To practice then before it is even recom-

mendable, that practice will give the advantage of expertneſs, and expertneſs will give the grace of eaſe, which is invaluable; nothing being ſuch an enemy to the graces as ſtiffneſs or affectation. This is a general rule both for compoſition and performance.

Education has doubtleſs a great ſhare in giving early to the body a command of graceful poſitions, eſpecially for the grand and ſerious dances, which, as I have before obſerved, are the principal grounds of the art. And once more, the great point is not to ſtick at mediocrity; but to aim at an excellence in the art, that may give at leaſt the beſt chance for not being confounded with the croud. If it is true, that, among the talents, thoſe which are calculated for pleaſing, are not

thoſe

thoſe that are the leaſt ſure of encouragement; it is alſo equally true, that for any dependence to be had on them, it is ſomething more than an ordinary degree of merit in them that is required.

In ſupport of this admonition, I am here tempted to enliven this eſſay with the narrative of an adventure in real life, that may ſerve to break the too long a line of an attempt at inſtruction.

A celebrated female dancer in Italy, deſigning to perform at a certain capital, wrote to her correſpondent there to provide her an apartment ſuitable to the genteel figure which ſhe had always made in life. On her arrival, her acquaintance ſeeing ſhe had brought nothing with her, but her own perſon and two ſervants,

vants, aſked her when ſhe expected her baggage. She anſwered, with a ſmile, "If you will come to-morrow morn-"ing and breakfaſt with me, you, and "whoever you will bring with you, "ſhall ſee it, and I promiſe you it is "worth your while ſeeing, being a "ſort of merchandize that is very much "in faſhion."

Curioſity carried a number early to the rendezvous, where, after an elegant breakfaſt, ſhe got up, and danced before them in a moſt ſurprizingly charming manner.

"Theſe, ſaid ſhe, (pointing at her "legs,) are all the baggage I have left; "the Alps have ſwallowed up all the "reſt." The truth was, ſhe had been really robbed of her baggage in her journey, and the merchandize on which ſhe

ſhe now depended, was her talent at dancing. Nor was ſhe deceived, for her inimitable performance, joined to the vivacity with which ſhe bore her misfortunes, in the ſpirit of the old Philoſopher, who valued himſelf upon carrying his all about him, made her many friends, whoſe generous compaſſion ſoon enabled her to appear in her former ſtate.

As to the compoſition of dances, it is impoſſible for a profeſſor of this art, to make any figure without a competent ſtock of original ideas, reducible into practice. A dance ſhould be a kind of regular dramatic poem to be executed by dancing, in a manner ſo clear, as to give to the underſtanding of the ſpectator no trouble in making out the meaning of the whole, or of any part of it. All ambiguity

ambiguity being as great a fault of ſtile in ſuch compoſitions, as in writing. It is even harder to be repaired; for a falſe expreſſion in the motions, geſtures, or looks, may confuſe and bewilder the ſpectator ſo as that he will not eaſily recover the clue or thread of the fable intended to be repreſented.

Clearneſs then is one of the principal points of merit which the compoſer ſhould have in view; if the effect, reſulting from the choice and diſpoſition of the ground-work of his drama, does honor to his inventiveneſs or taſte; the juſtneſs, with which every character is to be performed, is not leſs eſſential to the ſucceſs of his production, when carried into execution.

To be well aſſured of this, it cannot but be neceſſary that the compoſer

poſer of the dance or ballet-maſter, ſhould be himſelf a good performer, or at leaſt underſtand the grounds of his art.

He muſt alſo, in his compoſition, be pre-aſſured of all the neceſſaries for their complete execution. Otherwiſe decorations either deficient or not well adapted; an inſufficient number of performers, or their being bad ones; or, in ſhort, the fault of a manager, who, through a miſplaced economy, would not allow the requiſite expences; all theſe, or any of theſe, might ruin the compoſition, and the compoſer might, after taking all imaginable pains to pleaſe, find his labor abortive, and himſelf condemned for what he could not help. There is no exhibiting with ſucceſs any entertainment of this ſort without hav-

ing all the neceſſary performers and accompaniments. It will be in a great meaſure perfect or imperfect in proportion as they are ſupplied or withheld.

A good ballet-maſter muſt eſpecially have regard to both poetical and pictureſque invention; his aim being to unite both thoſe arts under one exhibition. The poetical part of the compoſition being neceſſary to furniſh a well-compoſed piece that ſhall begin with a clear expoſition, and proceed unfolding itſelf to the concluſion, in ſituations well choſen, and well expreſſed. The pictureſque part is alſo highly eſſential for the formation of the ſteps, attitudes, geſtures, looks, grouping the performers, and planning their evolutions; all for the greateſt and juſteſt effect.

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He ſhould himſelf be thoroughly ſtruck with his initial idea, which will lead him to the ſecond, and ſo on methodically until the whole is concluded, without having recourſe to a method juſtly exploded by the beſt maſters, that of choregraphy or noting dances, which only ſerves to obſtruct and infrigidate the fire of compoſition. When he ſhall have finiſhed his compoſition, he may then coolly review it, and make what diſpoſition and arrangement of the parts ſhall appear the beſt to him. Every interruption is to be avoided, in thoſe moments, when the imagination is at its higheſt pitch of inventing and projecting. There are few artiſts who have not, at times, experienced in themſelves a more than ordinary diſpoſition or aptitude, for this operation of the mind; and it is theſe critical mo-

ments, which may otherwiſe be irretrievable, they ought particularly to improve, with as little diverſion from them as poſſible. They ſhould purſue a thought, or a hint of a thought, from its firſt crudity to its utmoſt maturity.

A man of true genius in any of the imitative arts, and there is not one that has a juſter claim to that title than the art of dancing, ſenſible that nature is the varied and abundant ſpring of all objects of imitation, conſiders her and all her effects with a far different eye from thoſe who have no intention of availing themſelves of the matter ſhe furniſhes for obſervation. He will diſcover eſſential differences between objects, where a ſuperficial beholder ſees nothing but ſameneſs; and in his imitation he will

will ſo well know how to render thoſe differences diſcernible, that in the compoſition of his dance, the moſt trite ſubject will aſſume the air of novelty with the grace of variety.

There is nothing diſguſts ſo much as repetitions of the ſame thing; and a compoſer of dances will avoid them as ſtudiouſly as painters do in their pieces, or writers tautology.

The public complains, with great reaſon, that dances are frequently void of action, which is the fault of the performers not giving themſelves the trouble to ſtudy juſt ones: ſatisfied with the more mechanical part of dancing, they never think of connecting the part of the actor with it, which however is indiſpenſably neceſſary

ceſſary to give to their performance, ſpirit, and animation.

A dance without meaning is a very inſipid botch. The ſubject of the compoſition ſhould always be ſtrictly connected to the dances, ſo as that they ſhould be in equal correſpondence to one another. And, where a dance is expletively introduced in the intervals of the acts, the ſubject of it ſhould have, at leaſt, ſome affinity to the piece. A long cuſtom has made the want of this attention paſs unnoticed. It is ſurely an abſurd and an unnatural patchwork, between the acts of a deep tragedy, to bring on, abruptly by way of diverſion, a comic dance. By this contraſt both entertainments are hurt; the abruptneſs of the tranſition is intolerable to the audience; and the thread, eſpecially

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of the tragic fable, is unpleaſingly broken. The ſpectators cannot bear to be ſo ſuddenly toſſed from the ſerious to the mirthful, and from the mirthful to the ſerious. In ſhort, ſuch an heterogeneous adulteration has all the abſurdity reproached to the motley mixture in tragi-comedy, without any thing of that connection which is preſerved in that kind of juſtly exploded dramatic compoſition. How eaſy too to avoid this defect, by adapting the ſubjects of the dances to the different exigences of the different dramas, whether ſerious, comic, or farcical!

One great ſource of this diſorder, is probably the managers conſidering dances in nothing better than in the light of merely a mechanical execution for the amuſement of the eye, and

and incapable of ſpeaking to the mind. And in this miſtake they are certainly juſtifiable by the great degeneracy of this art, from the pitch of perfection to which it was antiently carried, and to which the encouragement of the public could not fail to reſtore it. The managers would then ſee their intereſt too clearly in conſulting the greater pleaſure of the public, not to afford to this art, the requiſite cultivation and means of improvement.

The compoſer, who muſt even have ſomething of the poet in him; the muſician, the painter, the mechanic, are eſſentially neceſſary to the contribution of their reſpective arts, towards the harmony and perfection of compoſition, in a fine dramatic dance; even the dreſſes are no inconſiderable part of the

the entertainment. The *coſtume*, or in a more general term, propriety, ſhould have the direction of them. It is not magnificence, that is the great point, but their being well aſſorted to character and circumſtances. The French are notoriouſly faulty in over-dreſſing their characters, and in making them fine and ſhowy, where their ſimplicity would be their greateſt ornament. I do not mean a ſimplicity that ſhould have any thing mean, low or indifferent in it; but, for example, in rural characters, the ſimplicity of nature, if I may uſe the expreſſion, in her holy-day-cloaths.

As to the decorations and machines eſpecially, I know of no place where there is leſs excuſe for their being deficient in them than in London, where they are too manifeſtly, to bear

any ſuſpicion of flattery in the attributing it to them, executed to a perfection that is not known in any other part of Europe. The quickneſs with which the ſhifts and deceptions in the pantomime entertainments are performed here, have been attempted in many other parts; but the perſons there employed, not having the ſame ſkill and depth in mechanics as the artiſts here, cannot come up to them in this point. And it is in this point preciſely that a compoſer of dances may be furniſhed with great aſſiſtence in the effects from the theatrical illuſion. And in an entertainment, where by an eſtabliſhed tacit agreement between the audience and performers, there is ſuch a latitude of introducing ſuperhuman perſonages, either of the heathen deities, or of fairy-hood, inchanters, and the like, thoſe transformations and deceptions

tions of the ſight aré even in the order of natural conſequences, from the preſuppoſed and allowed power of ſuch characters to operate them. At the ſame time the rules of probability muſt even there be obſerved. Nor is it amiſs to be very ſparing and reſerved in the compoſition of thoſe dances, grounded on the introduction of purely imaginary beings, ſuch as the allegorical imperſonation of the moral Beings, whether the Virtues or the Vices. Unleſs the invention is very intereſting indeed, the characters diſtinctly marked, and the application very juſt and obvious; their effect is rarely anſwerable to expectation, eſpecially on the audiences of this country. The taſte here for thoſe airy ideal characters is not very high, and perhaps not the worſe for not being ſo.

Among the many loſſes which this art has ſuſtained, one ſurely, not the leaſt regrettable, even for our theatres, was that of the dances in armour, practiſed by the Greeks, which they uſed by way of diverſion and of *exerciſe* for invigorating their bodies. Sometimes they had only bucklers and javelins in their hands: but, on certain occaſions they performed in panoply, or complete ſuits of armour. Strengthened by their daily and various manly exerciſes, they were enabled to execute theſe dances, with a ſurpriſing exactneſs and dexterity. The martial ſimphony that accompanied them, was performed by a numerous band of muſic; for the claſh of their arms being ſo loud, would elſe have drowned the tune or airs of the muſicians. It is impoſſible to imagine a more

a more ſublime, ſplendid and pictureſque ſight than what theſe dances afforded, in the brilliancy of their arms, and the variety of their evolutions; while the delight they took in it, inſpired them with as much martial fire, as if they had been actually going to meet the enemy. And indeed this diverſion was ſo much of the nature of the military exerciſe, that none could be admitted who were not thoroughly expert in all martial training. In time of peace, this kind of dance was conſidered as even neceſſary to keep up that ſuppleneſs and athletic diſpoſition of body, to bear action and fatigue, eſſential to the military profeſſion. If the practice had been neglected, but for a few days, they obſerved a numbneſs inſenſibly diffuſe itſelf over the whole body. They were perſuaded then that the beſt way of preſerving their health, and

fitneſs

fitneſs for action, and conſequently to qualify them for the moſt heroic enterprizes, was to keep up this kind of exerciſe, in the form of diverſion.

Theſe martial dances, have, in ſome operas of Italy, been attempted to be imitated, with ſome degree of ſucceſs: but as the performers had not been trained up to ſuch an exerciſe, like the Greeks, it was not to be expected that the repreſentation ſhould have the ſame perfection, or color of life.

The compoſition of the muſic, and the ſuiting the airs to the intended execution of a dance, is a point of which it is ſcarce needful to inſiſt on the importance, from its being ſo obvious and ſo well known. Nothing can produce a more diſagreeable diſcordance than a performer's dancing out of

of time. And here it may be obſerved, how much lies upon a dancer, in his being at once obliged to adapt his motions exactly to the muſic and to the character: which forms a double incumbence, neither point of which he can neglect, without falling into unpardonable errors.

Where dances are well compoſed, they may give a picture, to the life, of the manners and genius of each nation and each age, in conformity to the ſubject reſpectively choſen. But then the truth of the *coſtume*, and of natural and hiſtorical repreſentation muſt be ſtrictly preſerved. Objects muſt be neither exagerated beyond probability, nor diminiſhed ſo as not to pleaſe or affect. A real genius will not be affraid of ſtriking out of the common paths, and, ſenſible

ſible that inventiveneſs is a merit, he will create new theatrical ſubjects, or produce varied combinations of old ones. And where the decorations, or requiſite accompaniments are not ſupplied as he could wiſh, he muſt endeavour to make the moſt of what he can get, towards the exhibition of his production; if not with all the advantage of which it is ſuſceptible, at leaſt with all thoſe he can procure for it. Where the beſt cannot be obtained, he muſt be content with the leaſt bad. But eſpecially a compoſer of dances ſhould never loſe ſight of his duty in preſerving to his art its power of competition, as well as its affinity with the other imitative arts, in the expreſſion of nature; all the paſſions and ſentiments being manifeſtly to be marked by motion, geſtures, and attitudes, to the time of

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a correſpondent and well adapted muſic. While all this aided and ſet off, by the accompaniments of proper decorations of painting, and, where neceſſary, of machinery, makes that, a well compoſed dance, may very juſtly be deemed a ſmall poem, thrown into the moſt lively action imaginable; into an action ſo expreſſive as not to need the aid of words, for conveying its meaning; but to make the want of them rather a pleaſure than matter of regret; from its exerciſing, without fatiguing, the mind of the ſpectator, to which it can never be but an agreeable entertainment, to have ſomething left for its own making out, always provided that there be no perplexing difficulty or ambiguity. Nothing of which is impoſſible to an artiſt who has the talent of making

a right choice among the moſt pleaſing objects of nature; of ſufficiently feeling what he aims at expreſſing; of knowing how far it is allowable for his art, to proceed towards the embelliſhing nature, and where it ſhould ſtop to avoid its becoming an impertinence; and eſpecially of agreeably diſpoſing his ſubject, in the moſt neat and intelligible manner that can be deſired.

SOME

SOME

THOUGHTS

On the UTILITY of

LEARNING to DANCE,

And Eſpecially upon the

MINUET.

WAS I, in quality of a dancing-maſter, to offer even the ſtrongeſt reaſons of inducement to learn this art, they could not but juſtly loſe much, if not all, of their weight, from my ſuppoſed intereſt in the of-

fering them; beſides the partiality every artiſt has for his art.

It would however exceed the bounds preſcribed to modeſty itſelf, were I to neglect availing myſelf of the authority of others, who were not only far from being profeſſors of this art, but who hold the higheſt rank in the public opinion for ſolidity of underſtanding, and purity of morals, and who yet did not diſdain to give their opinion in favor of an art only imagined frivolous, for want of conſidering it in a juſt and inlarged view.

After this introduction, I need not be aſhamed of quoting Mr. Locke, in his judicious treatiſe of education.

" Nothing (ſays he) appears to me " to give children ſo much becom- " in g confidence and behaviour, and " ſo to raiſe them to the converſa- " tion

" tion of thoſe above their age, as danc-
" ing. I think they ſhould be taught
" to dance as ſoon as they are capable
" of learning it; for though this con-
" ſiſts only in outward gracefulneſs of
" motion, yet, I know not how, it
" gives children manly thoughts and
" carriage more than any thing."

In another place, he ſays,

" Dancing being that which gives
" graceful motions to all our lives, and
" above all things, manlineſs, and a
" becoming confidence to young chil-
" dren, I think it cannot be learned
" too early, after they are once capable
" of it. But you muſt be ſure to have
" a good maſter, that knows and can
" teach what is graceful and becom-
" ing, and what gives a freedom and
" eaſineſs to all the motions of the
" body.

" body. One that teaches not this, is " worſe than none at all; natural awk- " wardneſs being much better than apiſh " affected poſtures: and I think it " much more paſſable, to put off the " hat, and make a leg like an honeſt " country-gentleman, than like an ill- " faſhioned dancing-maſter. For as " for the jigging, and the figures of " dance, I count that little or nothing " better than as it tends to perfect grace- " ful carriage."

The Chevalier De Ramſay, author of Cyrus's travels, in his plan of education for a young Prince, has (page 14.) the following paſſage to this purpoſe.

" To the ſtudy of poetry, ſhould be " joined that of the three arts of imi- " tation. The antients repreſented the " paſſions,

" paſſions, by geſts, colors, and ſounds.
" Xenophon tells us of ſome wonderful
" effects of the Grecian dances, and
" how they moved and expreſſed the
" paſſions. We have now loſt the
" perfection of that art; all that re-
" mains, is only what is neceſſary to
" give a handſome action and airs to a
" young gentleman. This ought not
" to be neglected, becauſe upon the
" external figure and appearance, de-
" pends often the regard we have to the
" internal qualities of the mind. A
" graceful behaviour, in the houſe of
" Lords or Commons, commands the
" attention of a whole aſſembly."

And moſt certainly in this laſt allegation of advantage to be obtained by a competent ſkill, or at leaſt tincture of the art, the Chevalier Ramſay, has not exagerated its utility. Quintilian has

has recommended it, eſpecially in early years, when the limbs are the moſt pliable, for procuring that ſo neceſſary accompliſhment, in the formation of orators geſture: obſerving withall, that where that is not becoming, nothing elſe hardly pleaſes.

But even independent of that conſideration, nothing is more generally confeſſed, than that this branch of breeding qualifies perſons for preſenting themſelves with a good grace. To whom can it be unknown that a favorable prepoſſeſſion at the firſt ſight is often of the higheſt advantage; and that the power of firſt impreſſions is not eaſily ſurmountable?

In aſſemblies or places of public reſort, when we ſee a perſon of a genteel carriage or preſence, he attracts our regard

regard and liking, whether he be a foreigner or one of this country. At court, even a graceful addreſs, and an air of eaſe, will more diſtinguiſh a man from the croud, than the richeſt cloaths that money may purchaſe; but can never give that air to be acquired only by education.

There are indeed who, from indolence or ſelf-ſufficiency, affect a ſort of careleſſneſs in their gait, as diſdaining to be obliged to any part of their education, for their external appearance, which they abandon to itſelf under the notion of its being natural, free, and eaſy.

But while they avoid, as they imagine, the affectation of over-nicety, they run into that of a vicious extreme of negligence, which proves nothing but

either a deficiency of breeding, or if not that, a high opinion of themſelves, with what is not at all unconſequential to that, a contempt of others.

Such are certainly much miſtaken, if they imagine that an art, which is principally deſigned to correct defects, ſhould leave ſo capital an one ſubſiſting as that of want of eaſe, and freedom, in the geſture and gait. On the contrary, it is as great an enemy to ſtiffneſs, as it is to looſeneſs of carriage, and air. It equally reprobates an ungainly ruſticity, and a mincing, tripping, over-ſoft manner. Its chief aim is to bring forth the natural graces, and not to ſmother them with appearances of ſtudy and art.

But of all the people in the world, the Britiſh would certainly be the moſt in

in the wrong for not laying a great enough ſtreſs on this part of education; ſince none have more conſpicuouſly the merit of figure and perſon; and it would in them be a ſort of ingratitude to Nature, who has done ſo much for them, not to do a little more for themſelves, in acquiring an accompliſhment, the utility of which has been acknowledged in all ages, and in all countries, and eſpecially by the greateſt and moſt ſenſible men in their own.

As to the ladies, there is one light in which perhaps they would not do amiſs to view the practice of this art, beſides that of mere diverſion or improvement of their deportment: it is that of its being highly ſerviceable to their health, and to what it can never be expected they ſhould be indifferent about, their beauty, it being the beſt

and ſureſt way of preſerving, or even giving it to their whole perſon.

It is in hiſtory a ſettled point, that beauty was no where more floriſhing, nor leſs rare, than among ſuch people as encouraged and cultivated exerciſe, eſpecially in the fair ſex. The various provinces and governments in Greece, all agreed, ſome in a leſs, ſome in a greater degree, in making exerciſe a point of female education. The Spartans carried this to perhaps an exceſs, ſince the training of the children of that ſex, hardly yielded to that of the male in laborioufneſs and fatigue. Be this confeſſed to be an extreme: but then it was in ſome meaſure compenſated by its being univerſally allowed, that the Spartan women owed to it that beauty in which they excelled the reſt of the Grecian women, who were themſelves

themſelves held, in that point, preferable to the reſt of the world. Hellen was a Spartan. Yet the legiſlator of that people, did not ſo much as conſider this advantage among the ends propoſed in preſcribing ſo hardy an education to the weaker ſex. His views were for giving them that health and vigor of body, which might enable them to produce a race of men the fitteſt to ſerve their country in war.

But as the beſt habit of body is ever inſeparable from the greateſt perfection of beauty, of which its poſſeſſor is ſuſceptible, it very naturally followed, that the good plight to which exerciſe brought and preſerved the females, gave alſo to their ſhape, that delicacy and ſuppleneſs, and to their every motion, that graceful agility which caracterized the Grecian beauties, and diſtinguiſhed

tinguiſhed them for that nymph-ſtile of figure, which we to this day admire in the deſcription of their hiſtorians, of their poets, or in the repreſentations that yet remain to us in their ſtatues, or other monuments of antiquity.

But omitting to inſiſt on the Spartan auſterity, and eſpecially on their gimnaſtic training for both ſexes, and to take the milder methods of exerciſe in uſe among the Grecians, we find that the chace, that foot-races, and eſpecially dancing, principally compoſed the amuſement of the young ladies of that country; where, in the great days of Greece, no maxim ever more practically prevailed, than that ſloth or inactivity was equally the parent of diſeaſes of the body, as of vices of the mind. Agreeable to which idea, one of the greateſt phyſicians now in Europe, the celebrated Tronchin,

chin, while at Paris, vehemently declaimed againſt this falſe delicacy and averſion againſt exerciſe; from which the ladies, eſpecially of the higher rank of life, derived their bad habits of body, their pale color, with all the principles of weakneſs, and of a puny diſeaſed conſtitution, which they neceſſarily intail on their innocent children. Thence it was that he condemned the uſing oneſelf too much to coaches or chairs, which, he obſerved, lowers the ſpirits, thickens the humors, numbs the nerves, and cramps the liberty of circulation.

Conſidering the efficacy of exerciſe, and that faſhion has aboliſhed or at leaſt confined among a very few, the more robuſt methods of amuſement, it can hardly not be eligible to cultivate and encourage an art, ſo innocent

innocent and ſo agreeable as that of dancing, and which at once unites in itſelf the three great ends, of bodily improvement, of diverſion, and of healthy exerciſe. As to this laſt eſpecially, it has this advantage, its being ſuſceptible at pleaſure, of every modification, of being carried from the gentleſt degree of motion, up to that of the moſt violent activity. And where riding is preſcribed purely for the ſake of the power of the concuſſion reſulting from it, to prevent or to diſſipate obſtructions, the ſprings and agitations of the bodily frame, in the more active kind of dances, can hardly not anſwer the ſame purpoſe, eſpecially as the motion is more equitably diffuſed, and ſuffers no checks or partiality from keeping the ſeat, as either in riding, or any other method of conveyance. At leaſt, ſuch an entertainment,

tainment, one would imagine, preferable, for many reaſons, to an exceſs of ſuch ſedentary amuſements as thoſe of cards, and the like.

Certainly thoſe of the fair ſex who uſe exerciſe, will, in their exemption from a depraved or deficient appetite, in the freſhneſs or in the glow of their color, in the firmneſs of their make, in the advantages to their ſhape, in the goodneſs in general of their conſtitution, find themſelves not ill repaid for conquering any ill-habit of falſe delicacy and ſloth, to which ſo many, otherwiſe fine young ladies, owe the diſorders of their ſtomach, their pale ſickly hue, and that languid ſtate of health which muſt poiſon all their pleaſures, and even endanger

their lives. Theſe are not ſtrained nor far-fetched conſequences.

But even as to thoſe of either ſex, the practice of dancing is attended with obviouſly good effects. Such as are bleſſed by nature with a graceful ſhape and are clean-limbed, receive ſtill greater eaſe and grace from it; while at the ſame time, it prevents the gathering of thoſe groſs and foggy humors which in time form a diſagreeable and inconvenient corpulence. On the other hand, thoſe whoſe make and conſtitution occaſion a kind of heavy proportion, whoſe muſcular texture is not diſtinct, whoſe necks are ſhort, ſhoulders round, cheſt narrow, and who, in ſhort are, what may be called, rather clumſy figures; theſe will greatly find their account in a competent exerciſe of the art of dancing, not only as it will give them

them a freedom and eaſe one would not, at the firſt ſight, imagine compatible with their figure, but may contribute much to the cure, or at leaſt to the extenuation of ſuch bodily defects, by giving a more free circulation to the blood, a habit of ſprightlineſs and agility to the limbs, and preventing the accumulation of groſs humors, and eſpecially of fat, which is itſelf not among the leaſt diſeaſes, where it prevails to an exceſs. Not that I here mean any thing ſo fooliſhly partial, as that nothing but dancing could operate all this; but only place it among not the leaſt efficacious means.

Nothing is more certain than that exerciſes in general, diverſions, ſuch as that of hunting, and the games of dexterity, keep up the natural ſtandard of ſtrength and beauty, which luxury and ſloth are ſure to debaſe.

Dancing furniſhes then to the fair-ſex, whoſe ſphere of exerciſe is naturally more confined than that of the men, at once a ſalutary amuſement, and an opportunity of diſplaying their native graces. But as to men, fencing, riding and many other improvements have alſo doubtleſs their reſpective merit, and anſwer very valuable purpoſes.

But where only the gentleſt exerciſe is requiſite, the minuet offers its ſervices, with the greateſt effect; and when elegantly executed, forms one of the moſt agreeable ſights either in private or public aſſemblies, or, occaſionally, even on the theatre itſelf.

Yet I ſpeak not of this dance here with any purpoſe of ſpecifying rules for for its attainment. Such an attempt would

would be vain and impracticable. Who does not know that almoſt every individual learner requires different inſtructions? The laying a ſtreſs on ſome particular motion or air which may be proper to be recommended to one, muſt be ſtrictly fobidden to another. In ſome, their natural graces need only to be called forth; in others the deſtroying them by affectation is to be carefully checked. Where defects are uncurable, the teacher muſt ſhow how they may be palliated and ſometimes even converted into graces. It will eaſily then be granted that there is no ſuch thing as learning a minuet, or indeed any dance merely by book. The dead-letter of it can only be conveyed by the noting or deſcription of the figure and of the mechanical part of it; but the ſpirit of it in the graces of the air and geſture, and the carriage of the dancer

dancer can only be practically taught by a good maſter.

I have mentioned the diſtinction of a good maſter, moſt aſſuredly not in the way of a vain ſilly hint of ſelf-recommdation; but purely for the ſake of giving a caution, too often neglected, againſt parents, or thoſe charged with the education of youth, placing children, at the age when their muſcles are moſt flexible, their limbs the moſt ſupple, and their minds the moſt ductile, and who are conſequently ſuſceptible of the beſt impreſſions, under ſuch pretended maſters of this art, who can only give them the worſt, and who, inſtead of teaching, ſtand themſelves in need of being taught. The conſequence then of ſuch a bad choice, is, that young people of the fineſt diſpoſition in the world, contract, under ſuch

ſuch teachers, bad, awkward habits, that are not afterwards eaſily curable.

Thoſe maſters who poſſeſs the real grounds of their art, find in their uniting their practice with their knowledge, reſources even againſt the uſual depredations of age; which, though it may deprive them of ſomewhat of their youthful vigor, has ſcarce a ſenſible influence on their manner of performance. There will ſtill long remain to them the traces of their former excellence.

I have myſelf ſeen the celebrated Dupré, at near the age of ſixty, dance at Paris, with all the agility and ſprightlineſs of youth, and with ſuch powers of pleaſing, as if the graces *in him* had braved ſuperannuation.

Such

Such is the advantage of not having been content with a ſuperficial tincture of this art; or with a mere rote of imitation, without an aim at excellence or originality.

But though there is no neceſſity for moſt learners to enter ſo deep into the grounds and principles of the art, as thoſe who are to make it their profeſſion, it is at leaſt but doing juſtice to one's ſcholars to give them thoſe eſſential inſtructions as to the graces of air, poſition, and geſture; without which they can never be but indifferent performers.

For example, inſtead of being ſo often told to turn their toes out, they ſhould be admoniſhed to turn their knees out, which will conſequently give the true direction to the feet.

A due attention ſhould alſo be given to the motion of the inſtep, to the air of ſinking and riſing; to the poſition of the hips, ſhoulders, and body; to the graceful management of the arms, and particularly to the giving the hand with a genteel manner, to the inflections of the neck and head, and eſpecially to the ſo captivating modeſty of the eye; in ſhort, to the diffuſing over the whole execution, an air of noble eaſe, and of natural gracefulneſs.

It might be too trite to mention here what is ſo indiſpenſable and ſo much in courſe, the ſtrict regard to be paid to the keeping time with the muſic.

Nothing has a better effect, nor more prepoſſeſſing in favor of the

performance to follow, than the bow or curtſy at the opening the dance, made with an air of dignity and freedom. On the contrary, nothing is more diſguſtful than that initial ſtep of the minuet, when auckwardly executed. It gives ſuch an ill impreſſion as is not eaſily removed by even a good performance in the remaining part of the dance.

There is another point of great importance to all, but to the ladies eſpecially, which is ever ſtrictly recommended in the teaching of the minuet; but which in fact, like moſt of the other graces of that dance, extends to other occaſions of appearance in life. This point is the eaſy and noble port of the head. Many very pretty ladies loſe much of the effect of their beauty, and of the ſignal

power

power of the firſt impreſſions, as they enter a room, or a public aſſembly, by a vulgar or improper carriage of the head, either poking the neck, or ſtooping the head, or in the other extreme, of holding it up too ſtiff, on the Mama's perpetually teizing remonſtrance, of "hold up your head, Miſs," without conſidering that merely bridling, without the eaſy grace of a free play, is a worſe fault than that of which ſhe will have been corrected.

Certainly nothing can give a more noble air to the whole perſon than the head finely ſet, and turning gracefully, with every natural occaſion for turning it, and eſpecially without affectation, or ſtifly pointing the chin, as if to ſhow which way the wind ſits.

But it muſt be impoſſible for thoſe who ſtoop their heads down, to give their figure any air of dignity, or grace of politeneſs. They muſt always retain ſomething of ignoble in their manner. Nothing then is more recommendable than for thoſe who are naturally inclined to this defect, to endeavor the avoiding it by a particular attention to this capital inſtruction in learning the minuet. It is alſo not enough to take the minuet-ſteps true to time, to turn out their knees, and to ſlide their ſtep neatly, if that flexibility, or riſe and fall from the graceful bending of the inſtep, is not attended to, which gives ſo elegant an air to the execution either of the minuet, or of the ſerious theatrical dances. Nothing can more than that, ſet off or ſhow the beauty of the ſteps.

It ſhould alſo be recommended to the dancers of the minuet, ever to have an expreſſion of that ſort of gaity and chearfulneſs in the countenance, which will give it an amiable and even a noble frankneſs. Nothing can be more out of character, or even diſpleaſing, than a froward or too penſive a look. There may be a ſprightly vacancy, an openneſs in the face, without the leaſt tincture of any indecent air of levity: as there may be a captivating modeſty, without any of that baſhfulneſs which ariſes either from low breeding, wrong breeding, or no breeding at all.

But to execute a minuet in a very ſuperior manner, it is recommendable to enter into ſome acquaintance, at leaſt, with the principles of the ſerious or grave dances, with a naturally genteel perſon,

perſon, a ſuperficial knowledge of the ſteps, and a ſmattering of the rules, any one almoſt may ſoon be made to acquit himſelf tolerably of a minuet; but to make a diſtinguiſhed figure, ſome notion of the depths and refinements of the art, illuſtrated by proper practice, are required.

It is eſpecially incumbent on an artiſt, not to reſt ſatisfied with having pleaſed: he ſhould, from his knowledge of the grounds of his art, be able to tell himſelf why he has pleaſed; and thus by building upon ſolid principles, preferably to mere lucky hits, or to tranſient and accidental advantages of form or manner, inſure the permanency of his power to pleaſe.

There is a vice in dancing, againſt which pupils cannot be too carefully guarded;

guarded; it is that of affectation. It is eſſentially different from that deſire of pleaſing, which is ſo natural and ſo conſiſtent even with the greateſt modeſty, in that it always builds on ſome falſity, miſtaken for a means of pleaſing, though nothing can more ſurely defeat that intention; there is not an axiom more true than that the graces are incompatible with affectation. They vaniſh at the firſt appearance of it: and the curſe of affectation is, that it never but lets itſelf be ſeen, and wherever it is ſeen, it is ſure to offend, and to fruſtrate its own deſign.

The ſimplicity of nature is the great fountain of all the graces; from which they flow ſpontaneous, when unchecked by affectation, which at once poiſons and dries them up.

Nature

Nature does not refuſe cultivation, but ſhe will not bear being forced. The great art of the dancing-maſter is not to give graces, for that is impoſſible, but to call forth into a nobly modeſt diſplay thoſe latent ones in his ſcholars, which may have been buried for want of opportunities or of education to break forth in their native luſtre, or which have been ſpoiled or perverted, by wrong inſtruction, or by bad models of imitations. In this laſt caſe, the maſter's buſineſs is rather to extirpate than to plant; to clear the ground of poiſonous exotics, and to make way for the pleaſing productions of nature.

This admirable prerogative of pleaſing, inſeparable from the natural graces, unpoiſoned by affectation, is in nothing more ſtrongly exemplified, than

than in the rural dances, where ſimplicity of manners, a ſprightly eaſe, and an exemption from all deſign but that of innocent mirth, give to the young and handſome villagers, or country-maids, thoſe inimitable graces for ever unknown to artifice and affectation. Not but, even in thoſe rural aſſemblies, there may be found ſome characters tainted with affectation; but then in the country they are exceptions, whereas in town they conſtitute the generality, who are ſo apt to miſtake airs for graces, though nothing can be more eſſentially different.

But how ſhall thoſe maſters guard a ſcholar ſufficiently againſt affectation, who are themſelves notoriouſly infected with it? Nay, this is ſo common to them, that it is even the foundation of a proverbial remark, that no gentle-

man can be ſaid to dance well, who dances like a dancing-maſter. Thoſe falſe refinements, that finical, affected air ſo juſtly reproached to the generality of teachers, a maſter ſhould correct in himſelf before he can well give leſſons for avoiding them to his pupils. And, in truth, they are but wretched ſubſtitutes to the true grounds and principles of the art, in which nothing is more ſtongly inculcated than the total neglect of them, and the reliance on the engaging and noble ſimplicity of nature.

It is then no paradox to ſay that the more deep you are in the art, the leſs will it ſtifle nature. On the contrary, it will, in the noble aſſurance which a competent ſkill is ſure to bring with it, give to the natural graces a greater freedom and eaſe of diſplay. Imperfection

of

of theory and practice cramps the faculties; and gives either an unpleasing faulteringness to the air, steps, and gestures, or wrong execution. And as the minuet derives its merit from an observation of the most agreeable steps, well chosen in nature and well combined by art, there is no inconsistence in avering that art may, in this, as in many other objects of imitative skill, essentially assist nature, and place her in the most advantageous point of light.

The truth of this will be easily granted, by numbers who have felt the pleasure of seeing a minuet gracefully executed by a couple who understood this dance perfectly. Nay, excellence in the performance of it, has given to an indifferent figure, at least a temporary advantage over a much superior one

in point of perſon only; and ſometimes an advantage of which the impreſſion has been more permanent.

But beſides the effect of the moment in pleaſing the ſpectators; the being well verſed in this dance eſpecially contributes greatly to form the gait, and addreſs, as well as the manner in which we ſhould preſent ourſelves. It has a ſenſible influence in the poliſhing and faſhioning the air and deportment in all occaſions of appearance in life. It helps to wear off any thing of clowniſhneſs in the carriage of the perſon, and breathes itſelf into otherwiſe the moſt indifferent actions, in a genteel and agreeable manner of performing them.

This ſecret and relative influence of the minuet, *Marcel*, my ever reſpected

ſpected maſter, whom his own merit in his profeſſion, and the humorous mention of him by *Helvetius*, in his famous book DE L'ESPRIT, have made ſo well known, conſtantly kept in view, in his method of teaching it. His ſcholars were generally known and diſtinguiſhed from thoſe of other maſters, not only by their excellence in actual dancing, but by a certain ſuperior air of eaſy-genteelneſs at other times. He himſelf danced the minuet to its utmoſt perfection. Not that he confined his practice to that dance alone; on the contrary, he confeſſed himſelf obliged for his greateſt ſkill in that, to his having a general knowledge of all the other dances, which he had practiſed, but eſpecially thoſe of the ſerious ſtile.

But

But certainly it is not only to the profeſſed dancer, that dancing in the ſerious ſtile, or the minuet, with grace and eaſe, is eſſential. The poſſeſſing this branch of dancing is of great ſervice on the theatre, even to an actor. The effect of it ſteals into his manner, and gait, and gives him an air of preſenting himſelf, that is ſure to prepoſſeſs in his favor. Perſons of of every ſize or ſhape are ſuſceptible of grace and improvement from it. The ſhoulders ſo drawn back as not to protuberate before, but as it were, to retreat from ſight, or as the French expreſs it *bien effacées*, the knees well turning outwards, with a free play; the air of the ſhape noble and diſengaged; the turns and movements eaſy; in ſhort, all the graces that characteriſe a good execution of the minuet, will, inſenſibly on all other occaſions, diſtribute through every

every limb and part of the body, a certain liberty and agreeableneſs of motion eaſier to be conceived than defined. To the actor, in all characters, it gives, as I have juſt before obſerved, a graceful mien and preſence; but, in ſerious characters, it eſpecially ſuggeſts that ſtriking portlineſs, that majeſtic tread of the ſtage, for which ſome actors from the very firſt of their appearance ſo happily diſpoſe the public to a favorable reception of their merit in the reſt of their part. An influence of the firſt impreſſion, which a good actor will hardly deſpiſe, eſpecially with due precaution againſt his contracting any thing forced or affected in his air or ſteps, from his attention to his improvement by dancing, as the very beſt things may be even pernicious by a miſuſe. Whatever is not natural, free, and eaſy, will undoubtedly

doubtedly, on the ſtage, as every where elſe, have a bad effect. A very little matter of exceſs will, from his aim at a grace, produce a ridiculous caricature. Too ſtiff a regulation of his motions or geſtures, by meaſure and cadence, would even be worſe than abandoning every thing to chance; which might, like the Eolian harp, ſometimes ſuffer lucky hits to eſcape him; whereas affectation is as ſure forever to diſpleaſe, as it is not to eſcape the being ſeen where it exiſts.

Among the many reaſons for this dance of the minuet having become general, is the poſſibility of dancing it to ſo many different airs, though the ſteps are invariable. If one tune does not pleaſe a performer, he may call for another; the minuet ſtill remaining unalterable.

There

There is no occaſion however for a learner to be confined to this dance. He ſhould rather be encouraged, or have a curioſity be excited in him, to learn eſpecially thoſe dances, which are of the more tender or ſerious character, contributing, as they greatly do, to perfect one in the minuet; independently of the pleaſure they beſides give both in the performance and to the ſight. The dances the moſt in requeſt are, the *Saraband*, the *Bretagne* the *Furlana*, the *Paſſepied*, the *Folie d'Eſpagne*, the *Rigaudon*, the *Minuet du Dauphin* the *Louvre*, *La Mariée*, which is always danced at the Opera of Roland at Paris. Some of theſe are performed ſolo, others are duet-dances. The *Louvre* is held by many the moſt pleaſing of them all, eſpecially when well executed by both performers, in a juſt concert of motions; no dance affor-

ding the arms more occaſion for a graceful diſplay of them, or a more delicate regularity of the ſteps; being compoſed of the moſt ſelect ones from theatrical dances, and formed upon the trueſt principles of the art. This dance is executed in moſt countries of Europe without any variation. It is generally followed or terminated by a minuet; and theſe two dances, the Louvre and the minuet, are at preſent the moſt univerſally in faſhion, and will, in all probability, continue ſo, from their being both pleaſing beyond all others, to the performers, as well as to the ſpectators, and from their not being difficult to learn, if the ſcholar has but common docility.

Youth being for learning this art undoubtedly the beſt ſeaſon, for reaſons as I have before obſerved, too obvious

obvious to need inſiſting on, the maſter cannot pay too much attention to the availing himſelf of the pliancy of that age, to give his ſcholars the neceſſary inſtructions for preparing and well-diſpoſing their limbs. This holds good, particularly with regard to that propenſity innate to moſt perſons of turning in their toes. I have already mentioned the expediency of curing this defect, by the directing them to acquire a habit of turning the knees outward, to which I have to add, that on the proper turn of the knee, chiefly depend the graces of the under part of the figure, that is to ſay, from the foot to the hip.

Frequent practice alſo of dancing, or of any ſalutary exerciſe, is alſo highly recommendable for obtaining a firm-

neſs of body; for a tottering dancer can never plant his ſteps ſo as to afford a pleaſing execution. It may ſound a little odd, but, the truth is, that in dancing, ſprightlineſs and agility are principally produced by bodily ſtrength; while on the contrary, weakneſs, or infirmity, muſt give every ſtep and ſpring, not only a tottering, but a heavy air. The legs that bear with the moſt eaſe the weight of the body, will naturally make it ſeem the lighteſt.

A

SUMMARY ACCOUNT

Of various kinds of

DANCES

In different Parts of the WORLD.

Cantatur et ſaltatur apud omnes gentes, aliquo ſaltem modo, QUINT.

IN

EUROPE.

AS almoſt every country has dances particular to it, or, at leaſt, ſo naturalized by adoption from others, that

that in length of time they paſs for originals; a ſlight ſketch of the moſt remarkable of them may ſerve to throw a light upon this ſubject, entertaining to ſome, and both entertaining and uſeful to others.

In BRITAIN, you have the horn-pipe, a dance which is held an original of this country. Some of the ſteps of it are uſed in the country-dances here, which are themſelves a kind of dance executed with more variety and agreeableneſs than in any part of Europe, where they are alſo imitatively performed, as in Italy, Germany and in ſeveral other countries. Nor is it without reaſon they obtain, here the preference over the like in other places. They are no where ſo well executed. The muſic is extremely well adapted, and the ſteps in general

neral are very pleaſing. Some foreign comic dancers, on their coming here, apply themſelves with great attention to the true ſtudy of the hornpipe, and by conſtant practice acquire the ability of performing it with ſucceſs in foreign countries, where it always meets with the higheſt applauſe, when maſterly executed. There was an inſtance of this, ſometime ago at Venice, at an opera there, when the theatre was as well provided with good ſingers and dancers, as any other. But they had not the good fortune to pleaſe the public. A dancer luckily for the manager, preſented himſelf, who danced the hornpipe in its due perfection. This novelty took ſo, and made ſuch full houſes, that the manager, who had begun with great loſs, ſoon ſaw himſelf repaired, and was

a gainer when he little expected it.

It is to the HIGHLANDERS in North-Britain, that I am told we are indebted for a dance in the comic vein, called the *Scotch Reel*, executed generally, and I believe always in *trio*, or by three. When well danced, it has a very pleaſing effect: and indeed nothing can be imagined more agreeable, or more lively and brilliant, than the ſteps in many of the Scotch dances. There is a great variety of very natural and very pleaſing ones. And a compoſer of comic dances, might, with great advantage to himſelf, upon a judicious aſſemblage of ſuch ſteps as he might pick out of their dances, form a dance that, with well adapted dreſſes, correſpondent muſic, and figures capable of a juſt perform-

ance,

ance, could hardly fail of a great ſucceſs upon the theatre.

I do not know whether I ſhall not ſtand in need of an apology for mentioning here a dance once popular in England, but to which the idea of low is now currently annexed. It was originally adapted from the Moors, and is ſtill known by the name of Morris-dancing, or Moreſc-dance. It is danced with ſwords, by perſons oddly diſguiſed, with a great deal of antic rural merriment: it is true that this diverſion is now almoſt exploded, being entirely confined to the lower claſſes of life, and only kept up in ſome counties. What the reaſon may be of its going out of uſe, I cannot ſay; but am very ſure, there was not only a great deal of natural mirth in it, but that it is ſuſceptible enough of

improvement, to reſcue it from the contempt it may have incurred, through its being chiefly in uſe among the vulgar; though moſt probably it may have deſcended among them from the higher ranks. For certainly of them it was not quite unworthy, for the Pirrhic or military air it carries with it, and which probably was the cauſe of its introduction among ſo martial a people. Rude, as it was, it might require refinement, but it did not, perhaps, deſerve to become quite obſolete.

In SPAIN, they have a dance, called, *Les Folies d'Eſpagne*, which is performed either by one or by two, with caſtanets. There is a dreſs peculiarly adapted to it, which has a very pleaſing effect, as well as the dance itſelf.

In

In FRANCE, their *Contre-dances*, are drawn from the true principles of the art, and the figures and ſteps are generally very agreeable. No nation cultivates this art with more taſte and delicacy. Their *Provençale* dance, is moſt delightfully ſprightly, and well imagined. The ſteps ſeem to correſpond with the natural vivacity and gaiety of the Provençals. This dance is commonly performed to the pipe and tabor.

The FLEMISH dances run in the moſt droll vein of true rural humor. The performers ſeem to be made for the dances, and the dances for the performers; ſo well aſſorted are the figures to the repreſentation. Several eminent painters in the groteſque ſtile, Teniers eſpecially, have formed many divert-

ing pictures taken from life, upon this ſubject.

At NAPLES, they have various groteſque dances, which are originals in their kind, being extremely difficult to execute, not only for the variety of the ſteps, but for the intricacy and uncommonneſs, or rather ſingularity of them.

But while I am mentioning Naples, I ought not to omit that effect of dancing, which is attributed to it, upon thoſe who are bitten with the *Tarantula*. The original of this opinion, was probably owing to ſome ſenſible phyſician, preſcribing ſuch a violent motion, more likely to be kept up in the patient, by the power of muſic, than by any thing elſe, as might enable him to expel the poiſon, by being thereby thrown into a copious ſweat, and by other benefits from

from ſuch a vehement agitation. This, it is ſuppoſed, was afterwards abuſed and turned into a mere trick, to aſſemble a croud and get money, either by ſham bites, or by making a kind of ſhow of this method of practice in real ones. However, that may be, the various grimaces or contortions, leaps and irregular ſteps, commonly uſed on this occaſion, to be executed to that ſort of muſic, or airs adapted to it, might afford a good ſubject for a groteſque dance, to be formed upon the plan of a burleſque or mock-imitation: and I am not quite ſure that the idea of ſuch a dance, has not been already carried into execution.

The caſtanets the NEAPOLITANS moſt frequently uſe, are of the largeſt ſize. It is alſo from Naples that we have taken the Punchinello dance.

At

At FLORENCE, they have a dance, called, *il Treſchone*. The country-women, in the villages, are very fond of it. They are generally ſpeaking, very robuſt, and capable of holding out the fatigue of this dance, for a long time. To make themſelves more light for it, they often pull off their ſhoes. The dance is opened by a couple, one of each ſex. The woman holds in her hand a handkerchief, which ſhe flings to him whom ſhe chuſes for her next partner, who, in his turn has an equal right to diſpoſe of it in the ſame manner, to any woman of the company he chuſes. Thus is the dance carried on without any interruption till the aſſembly breaks up.

The favorite dance of the VENETIANS, is what they call the *Furlana*, which is performed by two perſons dancing a-round

a-round with the greateſt rapidity. Thoſe who have a good ear, keep time with the croſſing their feet behind; and ſome add a motion of their hands, as if they were rowing or tugging at an oar. This dance is practiced in ſeveral other parts of Italy.

The Peaſants of TIROL, have one of the moſt pleaſant and groteſque dances that can be imagined. They perform it in a ſort of holy-day dreſs, made of ſkins, and adorned with ribbons. They wear wooden ſhoes, not uncurioufly painted; and the women eſpecially expreſs a kind of rural ſimplicity and frolic mirth, which has a very agreeable effect.

The GRISONS are in poſſeſſion of an old dance, which is not without its merit, and which they would not exchange

change for the politeſt in Europe; they being as invariably attached to it, as to their dreſs.

The HUNGARIANS are very noiſy in their dances, with their iron heels, but when they are of an equal ſize, and dreſſed in their uniforms, the agility of their ſteps, and the regularity of dreſs in the performers, render them not a diſagreeable ſight.

The GERMANS have a dance called the *Allemande*, in which the men and women form a ring. Each man holding his partner round the waiſt, makes her whirl round with almoſt inconceivable rapidity: they dance in a grand circle, ſeeming to purſue one another: in the courſe of which they execute ſeveral leaps, and ſome particularly pleaſing ſteps, when they turn, but ſo very

very difficult as to appear ſuch even to profeſſed dancers themſelves. When this dance is performed by a numerous company, it furniſhes one of the moſt pleaſing ſights that can be imagined.

The POLISH nobility have a dance, to which the magnificence of their dreſs, and the elegance of the ſteps, the gracefulneſs of the attitudes, the fitneſs of the muſic, all contribute to produce a great effect. Were it performed here on the theatre, it would hardly fail of a general applauſe.

The COSSACS, have, amidſt all their uncouth barbariſm, a ſort of dancing, which they execute to the ſound of an inſtrument, ſomewhat reſembling a Mandoline, but conſiderably larger, and which is highly diverting, from the extreme vivacity of the ſteps, and the

oddity of the contortions and grimaces, with which they exhibit it. For a groteſque dance there can hardly be imagined any thing more entertaining.

The RUSSIANS, afford nothing remarkable in their dances, which they now chiefly take from other countries. The dance of dwarfs with which the Czar Peter the Great, ſolemnized the nuptials of his niece to the Duke of Courland, was, probably rather a particular whim of his own, than a national uſage.

IN

IN

ASIA.

IN TURKY, dances have been, as of old in Greece, and elſewhere inſtituted in form of a religious ceremony. The *Derviſhes* who are a kind of devotioniſts execute a dance, called the *Semaat* in a circle, to a ſtrange wild-ſimphony, when holding one another by the hand, they turn round with ſuch rapidity, that, with pure giddineſs, they often fall down in heaps upon one another.

They have alſo in Turky, as well as India and Perſia, profeſſed dancers, eſpecially of the female ſex, under the name of dancing-girls, who are bred up, from their childhood, to the profeſſion; and are always ſent for to any great entertainment, public or private, as at feaſts, weddings, ceremonies of circumciſion, and, in ſhort, on all occaſions of feſtivity and joy. They execute their dances to a ſimphony of various inſtruments, extremely reſembling the antient ones, the *tympanum*, the *crotala*, the *cimbals*, and the like, as well as to ſongs, being a kind of ſmall dramatic compoſitions. or what may properly be called *ballads*, which is a true word for a ſong at once ſung and danced: *ballare* ſignifying to dance; and *ballata*, a ſong, compoſed to be danced. It is probable that from theſe eaſtern kind of dances, which are undoubtedly

doubtedly very antient, came the name, among the Romans, of *balatrones*. Nothing can be imagined more graceful, nor more expreſſive, than the geſtures and attitudes of thoſe dancing-girls, which may properly be called the eloquence of the body, in which indeed moſt of the Aſiatics and inhabitants of the ſouthren climates conſtitutionally excel, from a ſenſibility more exquiſite than is the attribute of the more northern people; but a ſenſibility ballanced by too many diſadvantages to be envied them. The Siameſe, we are told, have three dances, called the *Cone*, the *Lacone*, and the *Raban*. The *Cone* is a figure-dance, in which they uſe particularly a ſtring-inſtrument in the nature of a violin, with ſome others of the Aſiatic make. Thoſe who dance are armed and maſked, and ſeem to be a fighting rather than

than dancing. It is a kind of Indian Pirrhic. Their maſks repreſent the moſt frightful hideous countenances of wild-beaſts, or demons, that fancy can invent. In the *Lacone* the performers ſing commutually ſtanzes of verſes containing the hiſtory of their country. The Raban is a mixed dance, of men and women, not martial, nor hiſtorical, but purely gallant; in which the dancers have all long falſe nails of copper. They ſing in this dance, which is only a ſlow march without any high motions, but with a great many contortions of body and arms. Thoſe who dance in the Raban and Cone have high gilt caps like ſugar-loaves. The dance of the *Lacone* is appropriated to the dedication of their temples, when a new ſtatue of their *Sommona-codom* is ſet up.

In

In many parts of the Eaſt, at their weddings, in conducting the bride from her houſe to the bridegroom's, as in Perſia eſpecially, they make uſe of proceſſional muſic and dancing. But, in the religious ceremonies of the Gentoos, when, at ſtated times, they draw the triumphal car, in which the image of the deity of the feſtival is carried, the proceſſion is intermixed with troops of dancers of both ſexes, who, proceed, in chorus, leaping, dancing, and falling into ſtrange antics, as the proceſſion moves along, of which they compoſe a part; theſe adapt their geſtures and ſteps to the ſounds of various inſtruments of muſic.

Conſidering withal that the Romans, in their moſt ſolemn proceſſions, as in that called the *Pompa*, whichI have before mentioned, in which not only the Pirrhic

Pirrhic dance was proceſſionally executed, but other dances, in maſquerade, by men who, in their habits, by leaping and by feats of agility, repreſented ſatirs, the *Sileni*, and *Fauni*, and were attended by minſtrels playing on the flute and guitar; beſides which, there were *Salian* prieſts, and *Salian* virgins, who followed, in their order, and executed their reſpective religious dances; it may bear a queſtion whether not an unpleaſing uſe might not be made, on the theatres, of proceſſional dances properly introduced, and connected, eſpecially in the burleſque way. In every country, and particularly in this, proceſſions are eſteemed an agreeable amuſement to the eye; and certainly they muſt receive more life and animation from a proper intermixture of dances, than what a mere ſolemn march can repreſent, where there is nothing to amuſe but a long train of perſonages

perſonages in various habits, walking in parade. I only mention this however as a hint not impoſſible to be improved, and reduced into practice.

But even, where it might be improper or ridiculous to think of mixing dances with a proceſſion, though it were but in burleſque, which muſt, if at all, be the preferable way of mixing them, the pleaſure of thoſe who delight in ſeeing proceſſions and pageantry exhibited on the theatre, might be gratified, without any violence to propriety, by making them introductory to the dances of the grandeſt kind. For example; where a dance in Chineſe characters is intended, a proceſſion might be previouſly brought in, of perſonages, of whom the habits, characters, and manners might be faithfully copied from nature, and from the truth of

things, and convey to the ſpectator a juſter notion of the people from which the repreſentation was taken, of their dreſs and public proceſſions, than any verbal deſcription, or even prints or pictures. After which, the dance might naturally take place, in celebration of the feſtival, of which the proceſſion might be ſuppoſed the occaſion.

In order to give a more diſtinct idea of this hint, I have hereto annexed the print of a Chineſe proceſſion taken from the deſcription of a traveller into that country; by which a good compoſer would well know how to make a proper choice of what might be exhibited, and what was fit to be left out; eſpecially according as the dance ſhould be, ſerious or burleſque. In the laſt caſe; even

even the horſes might be repreſented by a theatrical imitation. And certainly, bringing the perſonages on in ſuch a regular proceſſion at firſt, would give a better opportunity of obſerving their dreſſes, than in the huddled, confuſed manner of grouping them, that has been ſometimes practiſed: to ſay nothing of the pleaſure afforded to the eye by the proceſſion itſelf.

The print annexed repreſents the proceſſion of a Chineſe Mandarin of the firſt order. Firſt appear two men who ſtrike each upon a copper inſtrument called a gongh, reſembling a hollow diſh without a border, which has pretty much the effect of a kettle-drum.

Follow the enſign-bearers, on whoſe flags are written in large characters

the Mandarin's titles of honour. Next fourteen ſtandards, upon which appear the proper ſimbols of his office, ſuch as the dragon, tiger, phœnix, flying tortoiſe, and other winged creatures of fancy, emblematically exhibited.

Six officers, bearing a ſtaff headed by an oblong ſquare board, raiſed high, whereon are written in large golden characters the particular qualities of this Mandarin.

Two others bear, the one a large umbrella of yellow ſilk (the imperial color) of three folds, one above the other; the other officer carries the caſe in which the umbrella is kept.

Two archers on horſeback, at the head of the chief guard: then the guards

guards, armed with large hooks, adorned with ſilk fringe, in four rows one above another; two other files of men in armor, ſome bearing maces with long handles; others, maces in the form of a hand, or of a ſerpent: others, equipped with large hammers and long hatchets like a creſcent. Other guards bearing ſharp axes: ſome, weapons like ſcythes, only ſtrait. Soldiers carrying three-edged halberds.

Two porters, carrying a ſplendid coffer, containing the ſeal of his office.

Two other men, beating each a *gongh*, which gives notice of the Mandarin's approach.

Two officers, armed with ſtaves, to keep off the croud.

Two

Two mace-bearers with gilt maces in the ſhape of dragons, and a number of officers of juſtice, ſome equipped with bamboes, a kind of flat cudgels, to give the baſtinado: others with chains, whips, cutlaſſes, and hangers.

Two ſtandard-bearers, and the captain of the guard.

All this equipage precedes the Mandarin or Viceroy, who is carried in his chair, ſurrounded with pages and footmen, having near his perſon an officer who carries a large fan in the ſhape of a hand-fire-ſcreen.

He is followed by guards, ſome armed with maces, and others with long-handled ſabres; after whom come ſeveral enſigns and cornets, with a great

great number of domeſtics on horſe-back, every one bearing ſome neceſſary belonging to the Mandarin: as for example, a particular Tartarian cap, if the weather ſhould oblige him to change the one he has on.

From the above, it may appear, what ſcope or range a compoſer may have for the exhibition of proceſſions and pageantry of other nations, as well as of the Chineſe; in all which, nothing is more recommendable than adhering, in the repreſentation, as much as the limitations of the theatre will admit, to the truth of things, as they actually paſs in the countries where the ſcene is laid: which is but, in ſaying other words, in this, as in every other imitative branch, ſtrike to nature as cloſe as poſſible.

IN

IN

AFRICA.

THE ſpirit of dancing prevails, almoſt beyond imagination, among both men and women, in moſt parts of Africa. It is even more than inſtinct, it is a rage, in ſome countries of that part of the globe.

Upon the Gold-coaſt eſpecially, the inhabitants are ſo paſſionately fond of it, that in the midſt of their hardeſt labor, if they hear a perſon

ſing, or any muſical inſtrument plaid, they cannot refrain from dancing.

There are even well atteſted ſtories of ſome Negroes flinging themſelves at the feet of an European playing on a fiddle, entreating him to deſiſt, unleſs he had a mind to tire them to death; it being impoſſible for them to ceaſe dancing, while he continued playing. Such is the irreſiſtible paſſion for dancing among them.

With ſuch an innate fondneſs for this art, one would imagine that children taken from this country, ſo ſtrong-made and ſo well-limbed as they generally are, and ſo finely diſpoſed by nature, might, if duly inſtructed, go great lengths towards perfection in the art. But I do not remember to have heard that the experiment

ment was ever made upon any of them, by ſome maſter capable of giving them ſuch an improvement, as one would ſuppoſe them ſuſceptible of.

Upon the Gold-coaſt, there long exiſted and probably ſtill exiſts a cuſtom, for the greater part of the inhabitants of a town or village to aſſemble together, moſt evenings of the year, at the market-place to dance, ſing, and make merry for an hour or two, before bed-time. On this occaſion, they appear in their beſt attire. The women, who come before the men, have a number of little bells tinkling at their feet. The men carry little fans or rather whiſks in their hand made of the tails of elephants and horſes, much like the bruſhes uſed to bruſh pictures; only that theirs are gilt at both

ends. They meet uſually about ſunſet. Their muſic conſiſts of horn-blowers or trumpeters, drummers, players on the flute, and the like; being placed a-part by themſelves. The men and women, who compoſe the dance, divide into couples, facing each other, as in our country-dances, and forming a general dance, fall into many wild ridiculous poſtures, advancing and retreating, leaping, ſtamping on the ground, bowing their heads, as they paſs, to each other, and muttering certain words; then ſnapping their fingers, ſometimes ſpeaking loud, at other times whiſpering, moving now ſlow, now quick, and ſhaking their fans.

Artus and Villault add, that they ſtrike each another's ſhoulders alternately with thoſe fans; alſo that the women, laying ſtraw-ropes in circles on the

the ground, jump into or dance round them; and clicking them up with their toes, caſt them in the air, catching them as they fall with their hands.

They are ſtrangely delighted with theſe gambols; but do not care to be ſeen at them by ſtrangers, who can ſcarce refrain laughing, and conſequently putting them out of countenance.

After an hour or two ſpent in this kind of exerciſe, they retire to their reſpective homes.

Their dances vary according to times, occurrences, and places. Thoſe which are in honor of their religious feſtivals, are more grave and ſerious. There have been ſometimes public dances inſtituted by order of their Kings, as at Abrambo,

a large

a large town in Widaw, where annually, for eight days together, there reſorted a multitude of both ſexes from all parts of the country. This was called the dancing-ſeaſon. To this ſolemnity all came dreſſed in the beſt manner, according to their reſpective ability. The dance was ridiculous enough; but it ſerved to keep up their agility of body. And amidſt all the uncouth barbariſm of their geſtures and attitudes, nature breaks out into ſome expreſſions of joy, or of the paſſions, that would not be unworthy of an European's obſervation.

They have alſo their kind of Pirrhic dances, which they execute by mock-ſkirmiſhing in cadence, and ſtriking on their targets with their cutlaſſes.

I have

I have already mentioned that it is from Africa, the Moreſc-dances originally came. But what is ſomewhat ſurpriſing, the Portugueze themſelves, among whom I will not however include the higher ranks of life in that nation, but, at leaſt, the number of the people who adopted, from the Caffrees, or Negroes of their African poſſeſſions, a dance called by them *LasChegançaſ*, (Approaches) was ſo great that the late King of Portugal was obliged to prohibit it by a formal edict. The reaſon of which was, that ſome of the motions and geſtures had ſo laſcivious an air, and were ſo contrary to modeſty, that the celebrated *Frey Gaſpar*, a natural ſon, if I miſtake not, of the late King of Portugal, repreſented ſo efficaciouſly to his Portugueze Majeſty, the ſhame and ſcandal of this dance being any longer ſuffered,

fered, that it was put down by royal authority. Nor was this done without occaſioning heavy complaints againſt *Frey Gaſpar*, againſt whom there were lampoons and ballads publickly ſung, upon his having uſed his influence to procure that prohibition.

IN

IN AMERICA.

IN this part of the world, ſo lately diſcovered, nothing is a ſtronger proof of the univerſality of dancing, of its being, in ſhort, rather an human inſtinct, than an art, than the fondneſs for dancing every where diffuſed over this vaſt continent.

In BRAZIL, the dancers, whether men or women, make a point of dancing bare-headed. The reaſon of this is not mentioned: it cannot however be thought a very ſerious one, ſince nothing can be more comical than their geſtures, their contortions of body, and the ſigns they make with the head to each other.

In MEXICO, they have alſo their dances and muſic, but in the moſt uncouth and barbarian ſtile. For their ſimphony they have wooden drums, ſomething in form of a kettle-drum, with a kind of pipe or flageolet, made of a hollow cane or reed, but very grating to an European ear. It is obſerved they love every thing that makes a noiſe how diſagreeable ſoever the ſound is. They will alſo hum over ſomething like a tune, when they dance

thirty

thirty or forty in a circle, ſtretching out their hands, and laying them on each others ſhoulders. They ſtamp and jump, and uſe the moſt antic geſtures for ſeveral hours, till they are heartily weary. And one or two of the company ſometimes ſtep out of the ring, to make ſport for the reſt, by ſhowing feats of activity, throwing up their lances into the air, catching them again, bending backwards, and ſpringing forwards with great agility. Then when they are in a violent ſweat, from this exerciſe, they will frequently jump into the water, without the leaſt bad conſequences to their health. Their women have their dancing and muſic too by themſelves; but never mingle in thoſe of the men.

In VIRGINIA, according to the author of the hiſtory of that country,

they have two different kinds of dancing; the firſt, either ſingle, or at the moſt in ſmall companies; or, ſecondly, in great numbers together, but without having any regard either to time or figure.

In the firſt kind one perſon only dances, or two, or three at moſt. While during their performance, the reſt, who are ſeated round them in a ring, ſing as loud as they can ſcream, and ring their little bells. Sometimes the dancers themſelves ſing, dart terribly threatening looks, ſtamp their feet upon the ground, and exhibit a thouſand antic poſtures and grimaces.

In the other dance, conſiſting of a more numerous company of performers, the dance is executed round ſtakes ſet in the form of a circle, adorned with

with ſome ſculpture, or round about a fire, which they light in a convenient place. Every one has his little bell, his bow and arrow in his hand. They alſo cover themſelves with leaves, and thus equipped, begin their dance. Sometimes they ſet three young women in the midſt of the circle.

In PERU, the manner of dancing has ſomething very particular. Inſtead of laying any ſtreſs on the motion of the arms, in moſt of their dances, their arms hang down, or are wrapped up in a kind of mantle, ſo that nothing is ſeen but the bending of the body, and the activity of the feet; they have however many figure-dances, in which they lay aſide their cloaks or mantles, but the graces they add, are rather actions than geſtures.

The

The PERUVIAN Creolians dance after the ſame manner, without laying aſide their long ſwords, the point of which they contrive to keep up before them ſo that it may not hinder them from riſing, or in coupeeing, which is ſometimes to ſuch a degree that it looks like kneeling.

They have a dance there, adopted from the natives, which they call *Zapatas*, (ſhoes) becauſe in dancing they alternately ſtrike with the heels and toes, taking ſome ſteps, and coupeeing, as they traverſe their ground.

Among the ſavages of North-America, we are told there are various dances practiſed, ſuch as that of the calumet, the leaders dance, the war-dance, the marriage-dance, the ſacrifice-dance, all which, reſpectively differ in the move-

ments,

ments, and ſome, amidſt all the wildneſs of their performance, are not without their graces. But the dance of the calumet is eſteemed the fineſt; this is uſed at the reception of ſtrangers whom they mean to honor, or of ambaſſadors to them on public occaſions. This dance is commonly executed in an oval figure.

The AMERICANS, in ſome parts, preſcribe this exerciſe by way of phiſic, in their diſtempers: a method of treatment, not, it ſeems unknown to the antients: but, in general, their motive for dancing, is the ſame as with the reſt of the world, to give demonſtrations of joy and welcome to their gueſts, or to divert themſelves. On ſome occaſions indeed, they make them part of the ceremony at their aſſemblies upon affairs, when even their

their public debates are preceded by dancing, as if they expected that that exercise would rouse their mental faculties, and clear their heads. The war-dance is also used by them, by way of proclamation of war against their enemies.

The foregoing summary sketch of some of the various dances, which are practised in different parts of the globe, and which, to describe universally and minutely, would fill whole volumes, may serve to show that nature has, in all parts of the inhabited world, given to man the instinct of dancing, as well as of speaking, or of singing. But it certainly depends on the nations who encourage the polite arts, once more to carry it up to that pitch of excellence, of which the history of the Greeks

Greeks and Romans ſhows it to have been ſuſceptible, among the antients, however the moderns may have long fallen ſhort of it. There has indeed lately appeared a dawning hope of its recovery; which, that it may not be fruſtrated, is the intereſt of all who wiſh well to an innocent and even uſeful pleaſure.

OF

PANTOMIMES.

AS this branch of the art of dancing is often mentioned, eſpecially in this country, without a juſt idea being affixed to it, or any other idea than what is vulgarly taken from a ſpecies of compoſitions which are ſometimes exhibited after the play, on the theatre here, (not to mention Sadler's wells) and go by the name of pantomime entertainments; it may not be unacceptable to the reader, my lay-

ing down before him the true grounds and nature of this diverſion, which once made ſo great a figure in the theatrical ſphere of action.

And as, on this point, Monſieur Cahuſac, an ingenious French writer, has treated the hiſtorical part of it with ſo much accuracy, that it was hardly poſſible to offer any thing new upon it, beyond what he has furniſhed; and that not to make uſe of his reſearches would only betray me into a fruitleſs affectation of originality, I am very ready to confeſs, that for the beſt and greateſt part of what I am now going to offer upon this ſubject I am indebted to his production.

That prodigious perfection to which the antients carried the pantomime art, appeared ſo extraordinary to the celebrated

brated abbot Du Bos, that, not be ing able to contradict the authorities which eſtabliſh the truth of it, he was tempted to conſider the art of dancing in thoſe times as ſomething wholly different from what is at preſent underſtood by dancing.

The chevalier Ramſay places it alſo among the loſt arts. Both, no doubt, grounding their opinion on that deficiency of execution on the modern theatres, compared to what is inconteſtably tranſmittedto us, by hiſtory, of the excellence of the antient pantomimes.

But none have more contributed to eſtabliſh the opinion of the pantomime art being an art totally different from that of dancing, and not merely an improvement of it, as was certainly the caſe, than ſome of the profeſſors of the

the art themſelves, who even exclaimed againſt M. Cahuſac, for his attempts to give juſter notions, and to recommend the revival of it.

We are too apt to pronounce upon poſſibilities from our own meaſure of knowledge, or of capacity. Nothing is more common than to hear men of a profeſſion declare loudly againſt any practice attempted to be eſtabliſhed for the improvement of their art, and peremptorily to aver ſuch a practice being impoſſible, for no other reaſon than that their own ſtudy and efforts had not been able to procure them the attainment of it. In this too they are ſeconded by that croud of ſuperficial people who frequent the theatres, and who can believe nothing beyond what themſelves have ſeen: any thing above the reach of what they are accuſtomed

or

or habituated to admire, always ſeems to them a chimera.

The reproach of incredulity is commonly made to men of the greateſt knowledge, becauſe they are not overapt to admit any propoſition without proof: but this reproach may, with more juſtice, be ofteneſt made to the ignorant, who generally reject, without diſcuſſion, every thing beyond their own narrow conception.

To theſe it may ſound more than ſtrange; it may appear incredible, that on the theatre of Athens, the dance of the Eumenides, or Furies, had ſo expreſſive a character, as to ſtrike the ſpectators with irreſiſtible terror. The Areopagus itſelf ſhuddered with horror and affright; men grown old in the profeſſion of arms, trembled; the mul-

multitude ran out; women with child miſcarried; people imagined they ſaw in earneſt thoſe barbarous deities commiſſioned with the vengeance of heaven, purſue and puniſh the crimes of the earth.

This paſſage of hiſtory is furniſhed by the ſame authors, who tell us, that Sophocles was a genius; that nothing could withſtand the eloquence of Demoſthenes; that Themiſtocles was a hero; that Socrates was the wiſeſt of men; and it was in the time of the moſt famous of the *Greeks* that even upon thoſe highly privileged ſouls, in ſight of irreproachable witneſſes, the art of dancing produced ſuch great effects.

At Rome, in the beſt days of thisart, all the ſentiments which the dancers expreſſed, had each a character of truth,

ſo

ſo great a power, ſuch pathetic energy, that the multitude was more than once ſeen hurried away by the illuſion, and mechanically to take part in the different emotions preſented to them by the animated picture with which they were ſtruck. In the repreſentation of *Ajax in a frenzy*, the ſpectators took ſuch violent impreſſions from the acting-dancer who repreſented him, that they perfectly broke out, into outcries; ſtripped, as it were, to fight, and actually came to blows among each other, as if they had caught their rage from what was paſſing on the theatre.

At another time they melted into tears at the tender affliction of Hecuba.

And upon whom were theſe lively impreſſions produced? Upon the co-

temporaries of Mecenas, of Lucullus, Auguſtus, Virgil, Pollio; upon men of the moſt refined taſte, whoſe criticiſm was as ſevere as their approbation honorable; who never ſpared their cenſure nor their applauſe, where either was due. How, eſpecially under the eyes of Horace, could any thing paſs the approbation of the public, unleſs under the ſeal of excellence in point of art and good taſte? Would Auguſtus have declared himſelf the ſpecial patron of a kind of entertainment that had been deficient as to probability and genius? Would Mecenas, the protector of Virgil, and of all the fine arts, have been pleaſed with a ſight that was not a ſtriking imitation of beautiful nature?

The proofs ſhown of the perfection of dancing at Athens, and under the reign of Auguſtus, being inconteſtable,

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it is plain that what now paſſes for the art of dancing, is as yet only in its infancy. To diſplay the arms gracefully, to preſerve the equilibrium in the poſitions, to form ſteps with a lightneſs of air; to unfold all the ſprings of the body in harmony to the muſic, all theſe points, ſufficient to what may be called private, or to aſſembly-dancing, are little more than the alphabet of the theatrical dances, or of pantomime execution. The ſteps and figures are but the letters and words of this art. A writing-maſter is one who teaches the mechanical part of forming letters. A mere dancing-maſter is an artiſt who teaches to form ſteps. But the firſt is not more different from what we call a man of letters, or a *writer*, than the ſecond is from what may deſerve on the theatre, the name of principal dancer.

Beſides the neceſſity of learning his art elementally, a dancer, like a writer, ſhould have a ſtile of his own, an original ſtile: more or leſs valuable, according as he can exhibit, expreſs, and paint with elegance a greater or leſſer quantity of things admirable, agreeable, and uſeful.

Speech is ſcarce more expreſſive, than the geſtual language. The art of painting, which places before our eyes the moſt pathetic, or the moſt gay images of human life, compoſes them of nothing but of attitudes, of poſitions of the arms, expreſſions of the countenance, and of all theſe parts dancing is compoſed, as well as painting.

But, as I have before obſerved, painting can expreſs no more than an inſtant of action. Theatrical dancing can exhibit

hibit all the ſucceſſive inſtants it chuſes to paint. Its march proceeds from picture to picture, to which, motion gives life. In painting, life is only imitated; in dancing, it is always the reality itſelf.

Dancing is, evidently, in its nature, an action upon the theatres; nothing is wanting to it but meaning: it moves to the right, to the left; it retrogrades, it advances, it forms ſteps, it delineates figures. There is only wanting to all this an arrangement of the motions, to furniſh to the eye a theatrical action upon any ſubject whatever.

The hiſtory of the art proves that the dancers of genius, had no other means or aſſiſtance in the world but this to expreſs all the human paſſions, and the poſſibilities

poſſibilities of it are in all times, the very ſame.

Both here, and in France, there have been ſome of theſe dramatic pieces in action, by dance, attempted, which have been well received by the public.

Some years ago, the Dutcheſs of Maine ordered ſimphonies to be compoſed for the ſcene of the fourth act of the *Horatii*; in which the young Horatius kills Camilla. Two dancers, one of each ſex, repreſented this action at *Sceaux*; and their dance painted it with all the energy and pathos of which it was ſuſceptible.

In Italy eſpecially many ſubjects of a what may be called low comedy, are very naturally expreſſed by dancing. In ſhort, there is hardly any comic action but what

what they repreſent upon their theatres, if not with perfection, at leaſt ſatisfactorily. And certainly the dance in action has the ſame ſuperiority over ſheer unmeaning dancing, that a fine hiſtory-piece has over cutting flowers in paper. In the laſt there is little more required than mechanical nicety, and, at the beſt, it affords no great pretention to merit. But it is only for genius to order, diſtribute and compoſe, in the other. A Raphael is allowed to take place in the Temple of Fame, by a Virgil; and the art of dancing is capable of having its Raphaels too. Pilades, and Bathillus were painters, and great ones, in their way. Picturesque compoſition is not leſs the duty of a compoſer of dances, than of a painter.

Among

Among the antients, that *Protheus*, of whom fabulous hiſtory records ſuch wonders, was only one of their dancers, who, by the rapidity of his ſteps, by the ſtrength of his expreſſion, and by the employment of the theatrical deceptions, ſeemed at every inſtant, to change his form. The celebrated *Empuſa* was a female dancer, whoſe agility was ſo prodigious that ſhe appeared and vaniſhed like a ſpirit.

But it was at Rome that the Pantomime art received its higheſt improvement. Pilades born in Cilicia, and Bathillus of Alexandria, where the two moſt ſurpriſing geniuſes, who, under the reigns of Auguſtus Cæſar, diſplayed their talents in their utmoſt luſtre. The firſt invented the ſolemn, grave and pathetic dances. The compoſitions of Bathillus

thillus were in the lively, gay, and ſprightly ſtile.

Bathillus had been the ſlave of Mecenas, who had given him his freedom in favor of his talents. Having ſeen Pilades in Cilicia, he engaged him to come to Rome, where he had diſpoſed Mecenas in his favor, who, becoming the declared protector of both, procured to them the encouragement of the Emperor.

A theatre was built for them: the Romans flocked to it, and ſaw, with ſurpriſe, a complete tragedy; all the paſſions painted with the moſt vigorous ſtrokes of repreſentation: the expoſition, plot, cataſtrophe expreſſed in the cleareſt and moſt pathetic manner, without any other means or aſſiſtence but that of dancing, executed to the ſimphonies

the beſt adapted, and far ſuperior to any that had been before heard in Rome.

Their ſurpriſe was not to end here. To this a ſecond entertainment ſucceeded; in which an ingenious action, without needing the voice or ſpeech, preſented all the characters, all the pleaſant ſtrokes, and humorous pictures of a good comedy.

And in both theſe kinds, the executive talents of Pilades and Bathillus correſponded to the boldneſs and beauty of the kind of compoſitions they had ventured to bring on the ſtage.

Pilades eſpecially, who was at the head of this project, was the moſt ſingular man that had till then appeared on the theatre. His fertile imagination

tion conſtantly ſupplied him with new means of perfecting his art and embelliſhing his entertainments. Athenæus mentions his having written a book much eſteemed on the depths and principles of his art.

Before him, ſome flutes compoſed the orcheſtra of the Romans. He reinforced it with all the known inſtruments. He added choruſes of dances to his repreſentations, and took care that their ſteps and figures, ſhould always have ſome relation or affinity to the principal action. He provided them with dreſſes in the higheſt taſte of propriety, and omitted nothing towards producing, keeping up, and puſhing to the higheſt pitch, the charm of the theatrical illuſion.

The actions on the Roman theatres were tragic, comic, or ſatirical; theſe laſt pretty nearly anſwering to what we underſtand by groteſque or farcical.

Eſopus and Roſcius had been, from their excellence in declamation, the delight and admiration of Rome. But on their leaving no ſucceſſors to their degree of merit; the taſte for dramatic poetry which was no longer ſupported by actors equal to them, began to decline; and the theatrical dances under ſuch great maſters as Pilades and Bathillus, either by their novelty, or by their merit, or by both, made the Romans the leſs feel their loſs of thoſe incomparable actors. The geſtual language took place of that which was declaimed; and produced regular pieces acted in the three kinds of tragedy, comedy, and farce or groteſque. The

ſpectators

ſpectators grew pleaſed with ſuch an exerciſe of their underſtanding. Steps, motions, attitudes, figures, poſitions, now were ſubſtituted to ſpeech; and there reſulted from them an expreſſion ſo natural, images ſo reſembling, a pathos ſo moving, or a pleaſantry ſo agreeable, that people imagined they heard the actions they ſaw. The geſtures alone ſupplied the place of the ſweetneſs of the voice, of the energy of ſpeech, and of the charms of poetry.*

This

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*Hanc partem Muſicæ diſciplinæ Majores mutam nominârunt, quæ ore clauſo loquitur, et quibuſdam geſticulationibus facit intelligi, quod vix narrante lingua, aut ſcripturæ textu poſſit agnoſci.

Caſſiod, var. 1. 20.

Loquaciſſimas manus, linguoſos digitos, ſilentium clamoſum, expoſitionem tacitam.

Idem.

This kind of entertainment, ſo new, though formed upon a ground-work already known, planned and executed by genius, and adoped with a paſſionate fondneſs by the Romans, was called the *Italic dance*; and in the tranſports of pleaſures it cauſed them, they gave to the actors of it, the title of *Pantomimes*. This was no more than a lively, and not at all exagerated expreſſion, of the truth of their action, which was one continual picture to the eyes of the ſpectators. Their motion, their feet, their hands, their arms, were but ſo many different parts of the picture; none of them were to remain idle; but all, with propriety, were to concur to the formation of that aſſemblage, from which reſult the harmony, and, with pardon for the expreſſion, the happy *all-together* of the compoſition and performance. A dancer learned from his very

very name of *pantomime*, that he could be in no eſteem in Rome, but ſo far as he ſhould be *all the actor*.

And, in fact, this art was carried to a point of perfection hard to believe; but for ſuch a number of concurrent and authentic teſtimonies.

It appears alſo clearly from hiſtory, that this art, in its origin, (ſo favored by an arbitrary prince, and who alſo made ſome uſe of it, towards eſtabliſhing his deſpotiſm, nay even primordially introduced by Bathillus, a ſlave) could no longer preſerve its great excellence, than the ſpirit of liberty was not wholly worn out in the Roman breaſts; and, like its other ſiſter arts, gradually decayed and ſunk under the ſubſequent emperors.

Pilades

Pilades gave a memorable inſtance of the (as yet) unextinguiſhed ſpirit of liberty, when, upon his being baniſhed Rome, for ſome time, by Auguſtus Ceſar, upon account of the diſturbances the pantomime parties occaſioned, he told him plainly to his face, that he was ungrateful for the good his power received, by the diverſion to the Romans from more ſerious thoughts on the loſs of their liberty. "Why do "not you," ſays he, "let the people "amuſe themſelves with our quarrels?"

This dancer had ſuch great powers in all his tragedies, that he could draw tears from even thoſe of the ſpectators the leaſt uſed to the melting mood.

But in truth, the effect of theſe pantomimes, in general, was prodigious.

Tears

Tears and ſobs interrupted often the repreſentation of the tragedy of *Glaucus*, in which the pantomime Plancus played the principal character.

Bathillus, in painting the amours of Leda, never failed of exciting the utmoſt ſenſibility in the Roman ladies.

But what is more ſurpriſing yet, *Memphir*, a Pithagorean philoſopher, as Athenæus tells us, expreſſed, by dancing, all the excellence of the philoſophy of Pithagoras, with more elegance, more clearneſs and energy, than the moſt eloquent profeſſor of philoſophy could have done.

Upon conſidering all this, one is almoſt tempted to ſay, with M. Cahuſac, " We have, upon the ſtage, ex-

" cellent feet, lively legs, admirable " arms: what a pity it is, that with " all this we have ſo little of the art of " dancing!"

Our tragedy and our comedy have an extent and duration which are ſupported by the charms of ſpeech, by the intereſtingneſs of narration, by the variety of the ſallies of wit. The action is divided into acts, each act into ſcenes, theſe ſcenes ſucceſſively preſent new ſituations, and theſe ſituations keep up the warmth of intereſt and attention, form the plot, lead to the concluſion or unravelment, and prepare it.

Such muſt have been, or ſuch muſt be, (but with more preciſion and markingneſs) tragedies or comedies repreſented by dancing; as geſture is ſomething more marking and ſuccinct than ſpeech.

ſpeech. There are required many words to expreſs a thought, but one ſingle motion may paint ſeveral thoughts, and ſituations.

In ſuch compoſitions, then, made to be danced, the theatrical action muſt go forward with the utmoſt rapidity: there muſt not be one unmeaning entry, figure, or ſtep in them. Such a piece ought to be a cloſe crouded abſtract of ſome excellent written dramatic piece.

Dancing, like painting, can only preſent ſituations to the eye; and every truly theatrical ſituation is nothing but a living picture.

If a compoſer of dances ſhould undertake to repreſent upon the ſtage any great action or theatrical ſubject, he

muſt begin by making an extract from it, of all the moſt pictureſque ſituations. No other parts beſide theſe can enter into his plan; all the others are defective or uſeleſs, they can only embarras, perplex, confound, and render it cold and inſipid.

Whereas, if the ſituations ſucceed one another naturally, and in great number; if their being well linked together conducts them with rapidity, from the firſt ſituation to the laſt, which muſt clearly and ſtrikingly unravel the whole; the choice is complete, and the theatrical effect will be ſure.

It is that final effect, of which, in the execution, the compoſer and performer muſt never loſe ſight. Succeſſive pictures muſt be exhibited, and animated with all the expreſſion that can reſult

reſult from the impaſſioned motions of the dance.

This was doubtleſs the great ſecret of the art of Pilades, who ſo highly excelled in his ideas of theatrical expreſſion: this is, perhaps, too for all kinds of theatrical compoſition, whether to be declaimed, or to be executed by dancing, a general rule that is not to be ſlighted.

One inſtance of the regard ſhewn by Pilades to theatrical propriety is preſerved to us, and not unworthy of attention. He had been publickly challenged by Hilas, once a pupil of his, to repreſent the greatneſs of Agamemnon: Hilas came upon the ſtage with buſkins, which, in the nature of ſtilts, made him of an artificial height; in conſequence of which he greatly overtopped

topped the croud of actors who ſurrounded him. This paſſed well enough, 'till Pilades appeared with an air, ſtern and majeſtic. His ſerious ſteps, his arms a-croſs, his motion ſometimes ſlow, ſometimes animated, with pauſes full of meaning, his looks now fixed on the ground, now lifted to heaven, with all the attitudes of profound penſiveneſs, painted ſtrongly a man taken up with great things, which he was meditating, weighing, and comparing, with all the dignity of kingly importance. The ſpectators, ſtruck with the juſtneſs, with the energy and real elevation of ſo expreſſive a portraiture, unanimouſly adjudged the preference to Pilades, who, coolly turning to Hilas, ſaid to him, "*Young man, we had to repreſent a king* "*who commanded over twenty kings : you* "*made him tall : I ſhowed him great.*"

It was in the reign of Nero, that a cinical mock-philoſopher, called Demetrius, ſaw, for the firſt time, one of theſe pantomime compoſitions. Struck with the truth of the repreſentation, he could not help expreſſing the greateſt marks of aſtoniſhment: but whether his pride made him feel a ſort of ſhame for the admiration he had involuntarily ſhewn, or whether naturally envious and ſelfiſh, he could not bear the cruel pain of being forced to approve any thing but his own ſingularities; he attributed to the muſic the ſtrong impreſſion that has been made upon him: as, in that reign, a falſe philoſophy very naturally had a greater influence than the real, this man was, it ſeems, of conſequence enough for the managers of the dances to take notice of this partiality, or at leaſt to be piqued enough, for their own honor, to

lay

lay a ſcheme for undeceiving him. He was once more brought to their theatre, and ſeated in a conſpicuous part of the houſe, without his having been acquainted with their intention.

The orcheſtra began: an actor opens the ſcene: on the moment of his entrance, the ſimphony ceaſes, and the repreſentation continues. Without any aid but that of the ſteps, the poſitions of the body, the movements of the arms, the piece is performed, in which are ſucceſſively repreſented the amours of Mars and Venus, the Sun diſcovering them to the jealous huſband of the goddeſs, the ſnares which he ſets for his faithleſs ſpouſe and her formidable gallant, the quick effect of the treacherous net, which, while it compleats the revenge of Vulcan, only publiſhes his ſhame, the confuſion of Venus,

nus, the rage of Mars, the arch mirth of the gods, who came to enjoy the ſight.

The whole audience gave to the excellence of the performance its due applauſe, but the Cinic, out of himſelf, could not help crying out, in a tranſport of delight; "*No! this is not a repreſen-*" *tation; it is the very thing itſelf.*"

Much about the ſame time a dancer repreſented the *labors of* Hercules. He retraced in ſo true a manner all the different ſituations of that hero, that a king of Pontus, then at Rome, and who had never ſeen ſuch a ſight before, eaſily followed the thread of the action, and charmed with it, aſked with great earneſtneſs of the emperor, that he would let him have with him that extraordinary dancer, who had made

ſuch an impreſſion upon him. "Do "not, ſays he to Nero, be ſurpriſed at "my requeſt. I have for borderers "upon my kingdom, ſome Barbarian "nations whoſe language none of my "people could underſtand, nor they "learn ours. Such a man as this "dancer would be an admirable in-"terpreter between us."

It would then ſurely be a great error to imagine, that an habitual dexterity, a daily practice, with their arms, their legs and feet, were the only talents of theſe pantomime dancers. Their execution, without doubt, required all theſe advantages of the body in the moſt eminent degree; but their compoſitions ſuppoſed, and indiſpenſably implied an infinite number of combinations which belong intirely to the mind, or intellectual faculties; as for example, eſpe-

eſpecially an attentive and judicious diſcernment of the moſt intereſting truths of human nature. How extenſive a ſtudy this exacts, it is more eaſy to conceive than to attain.

And ſurely there is an evident neceſſity for ſtudying men, before one can undertake to paint or repreſent them. It is not till after a profound examination of the paſſions, that one ought to flatter one's ſelf with characteriſing them purely by the powers of external ſigns of actions. All the paſſions have affinities to each other, which it is only for a great juſtneſs of underſtanding to ſeize; they have ſhades that diſtinguiſh them, which nothing but a nice eye can perceive, and which eaſily eſcape a ſuperficial obſerver.

In ſerious dancing, where the character of a hero is to be given, there are in his actions, in the courſe of his life, certain marking ſtrokes, certain incidents or extraordinary paſſages, which are ſubjects proper for the ſtage, and which muſt be ſeparated from others perhaps more brilliant in hiſtory, but which would infrigidate a theatrical compoſition.

In the ſtate of dancing of our days, the dancers, and even the compoſers of dances, aſpire to little more than the mechanical part of their art; and, indeed, they hardly know any thing beyond that, and cannot in courſe, cultivate what they have no conception of.

When M. Cahuſac wrote, he obſerved that this was ſufficient for the ſpectators

ſpectators, who required nothing more than a brilliant execution from the dancers in the old track of ſteps and capers; and this is, in fact, true of the greater number now. But lately, the taſte for dances of action, animated with meaning and conveying the idea of ſome fable or ſubject, has begun to gain ground. People are leſs tired with a dance, in which the underſtanding is exerciſed, without the fatigue of perplexity, than by merely ſeeing a ſucceſſion of lively ſteps, and cabriols, however well executed; which, in point of merit, bear no more proportion to that of a well-compoſed dance, than a tireſome repetition of vignettes, of head-pieces and tail-pieces, would do to the gravings of hiſtorical pieces after a Raphael, a Michael Angelo, or a Correggio.

As hitherto the compoſer of the dances of action, have not been able to recover that height of perfection to which the antient pantomimes carried their art; the moſt that any compoſers could do, I mean with ſucceſs, (for there have been ſome attempts made, that, for want of a proper plan and execution, failed,) was to furniſh certain dances, in the nature of *poemetti* or ſmall dramatic poems, which, where the ſubject of action has been clearly and intelligibly executed, have ever been received with the moſt encouraging applauſe by the public.

And here the ingenious author to whom I am ſo much obliged in this chapter, furniſhes me with rules of compoſition for the dances of action, which can hardly be too much recommended.

All

All theatrical compoſitions ought to have three eſſential parts.

By a lively dialogue, in a piece made to be ſpoken, or by an incident dextrouſly introduced in one made for a dance in action, the ſpectator is to be prepared for the ſubject that is to be repreſented, and to have ſome acquaintance of the character, quality, and manners of the perſons of the drama: this is what is called *the expoſition.*

The circumſtances, the obſtacles which ariſe our of the ground-work of the ſubject, embroil it, and retard its march without ſtopping it. A ſort of embarraſment forms itſelf out of the actions of the characters, which perplexes the curioſity of the ſpectators, from whoſe even gueſs-work, the manner how all is to be ultimately unravelled is

to

to be kept as great a ſecret as poſſible: and this embarraſment is what is called *the plot*.

From this embarraſment, one ſees ſucceſſively break forth lights, the more unexpected, the better. They unfold the action, and conduct it by inſenſible degrees to an ingenious concluſion: this is what is called *the unravelment*.

If any of theſe three parts is defective, the theatrical merit is imperfect. If they are all three in due proportion, the action is complete, and the charm of the repreſentation is infallible.

As the theatrical dance then is a repreſentation, it muſt be formed of theſe three eſſentially conſtitutive parts. Thus it will be more or leſs perfect, according

ing as its expoſition ſhall be more or leſs clear, its plot more or leſs ingenious, its unravelment more or leſs ſtriking.

But this diviſion is not the only one that ſhould be known and practiſed. A dramatic work is commonly compoſed of five or fewer acts; and an act is compoſed of ſcenes in dialogue or ſoliloquy. Now every act, every ſcene, ſhould have, ſubordinately, its expoſition, its plot, and its unravelment, juſt as the total of the piece has, of which they are the parts.

So ought alſo every repreſentation in dancing to have thoſe three parts, which conſtitute every thing that is action. Without their union, there is no action that is perfect: a fault in one of thoſe parts will have a bad effect on the

others; the chain is broke; the picture, whatever beauty it may have in other reſpects, is without any theatrical merit.

Beſides theſe general laws of the theatre, which are in common to thoſe compoſitions of dances, that are to be executed on it, they are ſubjected to other particular rules, which are derived from the primitive principles of the art.

As the art of dancing eſſentially conſiſts in painting by geſtures and attitudes, there is nothing of what would be rejected by a painter of good taſte, that the dancer can admit; and, conſequentially, every thing that ſuch a painter would chuſe, ought to be laid hold of, diſtributed, and properly placed in a dance of action.

Here

Here, on this point, recurs that never too often repeated rule, as infallible as it is plain: *let nature, in every thing, be the guide of art; and let art, in every thing, aim at imitating nature:* a rule this, than which there is not one more trite, more hackneyed in the theory, nor leſs regarded in the practice.

Nature then being always Nature, always invariable in her operations and productions; there is no falſe concluſion, nor ſtraining inferences, in averring, that the art of dancing could not but be a great gainer by a revival of the taſte of the antients for the pantomime branch; which, upon the theatre, converted a tranſient flaſhy amuſement of the eye, into a rational or ſenſible entertainment, and made of dancers, who are otherwiſe, a mere mechani-

cal compoſition of feet, legs, and arms, without ſpirit or meaning, artiſts formed to paint with the moſt pathetic expreſſion, the moſt ſtriking ſituations of human nature: I am not afraid of uſing here the term of the moſt pathetic expreſſion, injuriouſly to the great power of theatrical declamation; becauſe the great effect and charm of the moment is, evidently, the more likely to be produced by attitudes or geſtures alone, unſeconded by the voice; for that the pleaſure of the ſpectator will have been the greater for the quickneſs of his apprehenſion not having needed that help to underſtand the meaning of them. And this is ſo true of the force of impreſſion depending on that part of bodily eloquence, that even in oratory, action was, by one of the greateſt judges of that art, pronounced to be the moſt eſſential part of it.

This

This may be, perhaps, an exaggeration: but when people reſort to a theatre to unbend, or relax, they will hardly think their pleaſure taſteleſly diverſified by a fine pantomime execution of a dramatic compoſition, to the perfection of which, poetry, muſic, painting, decoration, and machinery will have all contributed their reſpective contingents.

For the ſubjects of theſe poetical dances, the compoſer will undoubtedly find thoſe which are the moſt likely to pleaſe, in fabulous hiſtory, eſpecially for the ſerious, or pathetic ſtile. This we find was the great reſource of the antients, who had, in that point, a conſiderable advantage, from which the moderns are excluded, by the antient mithology having loſt that effect, and warmth of intereſt, which accom-

companied all tranſactions taken from it by their poets, and brought upon the theatre. The heroes of antiquity, the marvellous of their deities, and the hiſtories of their amours, or of their exploits, can never make the ſame impreſſion on the moderns ſo thoroughly differing in manners and ways of thinking, from thoſe, to whom ſuch exhibitions were a kind of domeſtic, and even religious remembrancers. The ſpectators of thoſe times were more at home to what they ſaw repreſented upon their theatres; the ground-work of the fable repreſented to the audience being generally foreknown, contributed greatly to the quickneſs of their apprehenſion; and its being part of their received theology, and often of the hiſtory of their own country, procured it the more favorable attention.

The

The greateſt part of theſe advantages are wanting in the employment of theſe fictions among the moderns; and to which however they are, in ſome meaſure, compelled to have recourſe, for want of theatrical ſubjects ſtriking enough to be agreeably thrown into a dance; by which I do not mean to exclude all ſubjects that have not thoſe poetical fictions of Greek and Roman antiquity for a baſis; on the contrary, it might juſtly paſs for a barrenneſs of invention, the being reduced conſtantly to borrow from them, but purely to point out a treaſure, ever open to the artiſt who ſhall know how to make a ſelection with judgment and taſte: always remembering, that the more univerſally the fable is foreknown, the more eaſy will the taſk be of rendering it intelligible in the execution.

There

There are, doubtleſs, ſome parts of the antient mithology ſo obſcure, and ſo little known, that any plan taken from them, would, to the generality of the ſpectators, be as great a novelty, as if the compoſer had himſelf invented the ſubject. There are others again of which all the intereſt is entirely antiquated and exploded.

As to the pieces of compoſition in the comic vein, there is nothing like taking the ſubject of them from the moſt agreeable and the moſt marking occurrences in real, current life; and the ſtronger they are of the manners and practice of the times, the nearer they will ſeem to the truth of nature, and the ſurer at once to be underſtood, and to have a pleaſing effect.

And

And here I ſhall take the liberty of concluding with offering two inſtances of poetic dances; the one in the ſerious, the other in the comic vein, which are furniſhed rather as hints of the improvable nature of ſuch compoſitions, than in the leaſt meant for models of them.

The firſt has for title,

VENUS and ADONIS.

The decoration repreſents a wood interſected by ſeveral walks, which form an agreeable perſpective of diſtances. At the bottom of the theatre, and in the middle, there is a grand walk, terminated by a ſmall mount, on the ſummit of which is ſeen a colonnade, that forms the periſtile of a temple.

Venus, preceded by the Graces and ſeveral nimphs, comes out of the temple, deſcends the mount, and advances to the front of the wood; the ſimphony to be the moſt agreeable and melodious imaginable, to announce the arrival of the goddeſs of love.

The Graces and the nimphs open the action, and by their geſtures and ſteps, expreſs their endeavour to ſooth the impatience of Venus on the abſence of Adonis. The agitation in which ſhe is, ought to be painted on her countenance, and expreſſed by the diſcompoſure of her ſteps, marking her anxiety and deſire of ſeeing her lover.

The ſound of the chace is heard, which betokens the approach of Adonis. Joy breaks forth in the eyes, the geſtures, and ſteps of Venus and her train.

Adonis,

Adonis, followed by ſeveral hunters, enters through one of the ſide-walks of the wood. Venus runs to meet him, and ſeems to chide him for having been ſo long away. He ſhows her the head of a ſtag, which he has killed, and which is carried, as in triumph, upon a hunting-pole, by one of the hunters; and offers it, as the fruit of his chace, in homage to the goddeſs, who is preſently appeaſed, and graciouſly receives his offering. Theſe two lovers then expreſs in a *pas-de-deux*, their mutual ſatisfaction.

The hunters mix with the Graces and nimphs, and form a dance which characteriſes their harmony.

Soon a noiſy ſimphony, of military inſtrumental muſic, gives warning of the arrival of Mars. Venus, Adonis,

the Graces, the nimphs, and hunters, ſhow ſigns of uneaſineſs and terror.

Mars, followed by ſeveral warriors, enters precipitately through a walk oppoſite to that by which Adonis and the hunters came. Venus ſeparates from Adonis, having inſiſted on his getting out of the way of the formidable god of war. He withdraws with his train by the ſame way as he came. Mars, inraged with jealouſy, makes a ſhew of going to purſue Adonis. Venus ſtops him, and employs, in her ſoothing and careſſes, all the uſual arts of appeaſing and blinding a jealous lover. She prevails at length, not only to diſſipate his paſſion, but to make him believe himſelf in the wrong for having been jealous.

The

The warriors addreſs themſelves to the Graces and nimphs, and form together a dance expreſſive of a ſort of reconciliation; after which Mars and his train return by the ſame way as they came.

Venus, the Graces, and the nimphs, ſee them go, and when they are got a little diſtance from them, teſtify their ſatisfaction at having got ſo well over this interruption.

Adonis returns alone: Venus ſprings to meet him, and gives him to underſtand that he has now nothing to fear; that Mars will not return in haſte.

In the ſame walk from which Adonis came, the hunters of his train are ſeen purſuing a wild boar, that tries to eſcape juſt by where the Graces and the nimphs are,

are, who, in their fright, attempt to fly from him: but he is already ſo near them, that they do not know how to avoid him. Adonis runs haſtily to pierce the boar with his javelin; but the boar gets him himſelf down. The hunters arrive at that inſtant, and kill the boar; but Adonis is nevertheleſs mortally wounded, and expires.

Here it is that the muſic and the dance are to diſplay their reſpective powers: the one by the moſt plaintive mournful ſounds; the other by geſtures and ſteps in which grief and deſpair are ſtrongly characteriſed, ought to expreſs the profound affection into which Venus is plunged, and the ſhare the Graces, the nimphs, and the hunters take in it.

Venus

Venus appears to implore the aid of all the gods, to reſtore her lover to her. She bathes him with her tears, and thoſe precious tears have ſuch a virtue, that Adonis appears all of a ſudden transformed into an anemony or wind-flower.

The Graces and the nimphs expreſs their ſurpriſe; but the aſtoniſhment of the hunters ſhould be yet more ſtrongly marked.

Venus herſelf is not the more comforted by this metamorphoſis. A flower cannot well ſupply the place of her lover. She turns then her eyes towards the earth, and ſeems to invoke the power of ſome deity inhabitant of its bowels.

The

The flower diſappears; the earth opens, and Proſerpine riſes out of it, ſitting on a chariot drawn by black horſes, and having at her ſide Adonis reſtored to life.

It is natural to imagine the joy that is at this to be expreſſed, by the ſimphony, by the geſtures, and ſteps of of Venus, of the Graces, the nimphs, and hunters.

Proſerpine, getting out of her chariot, holding Adonis by the hand, preſents him to Venus. A *pas-de-trois* or trio-dance follows, in which the joy of the two lovers at ſeeing one another again is to be characteriſed by all the expreſſion, and all the graces of the moſt pleaſing dance, while Proſerpine teſtifies her ſatisfaction at having produced the re-union: after which, ſhe gets

gets into her chariot, and re-deſcends into the earth.

The Graces, the nimphs, and hunters, expreſs how highly they are charmed at ſeeing Adonis again; Venus and Adonis form a *pas-de-deux*, or duet-dance, in which the Goddeſs takes off her girdle or *ceſtus*, and puts it upon Adonis, in the way of a ſhoulder-belt, or as now the ribbons of moſt orders of knight-hood are worn, which is to him a ſimbol of immortality.

The Graces and nimphs teſtify to Adonis how pleaſed they are to ſee him received into the number of the demi-gods: the hunters pay their homage to him, and the whole concludes by a general country-dance.

The other ſpecimen has for title,

The COQUETTE PUNISHED.

The decoration repreſents a delicious garden, in which there are ſeveral compartments, ſeparated by canals and *jet-d'eaux*. This ſcenery ſhould exhibit the proſpect of at once a pleaſure-garden, and a fruit-one.

In the bottom of this perſpective, there appear ſeveral gardeners buſied, ſome in pruning the hedges, others in ſowing and planting: more towards the front are ſeen, ſome women at work, tying up the flowers, or cleaning them from pernicious leaves; others ſetting roots in vaſes. All this forms the ſcenical picture at the drawing up the curtain.

A ſimphony mixed with the moſt rural inſtruments of muſic, begins with ſoft and ſoothing airs.

One of the female gardeners, more ſhowiſhly dreſſed than the others, and who is employed upon ſome neceſſary taſk about the flower-vaſes, ſeems however more attentive to the admiring the flowers, than to do her work: and as ſhe is ſtanding near a canal, ſhe is, when ſhe imagines none are taking notice of her, looking at her figure in the watery mirror, admiring herſelf, and adjuſting her dreſs. Though ſhe does all this by ſtealth, her companions remark her coquettry, make ſigns to each other, and point her out to the gardeners, who join the laugh at her, without the coquet's perceiving it, who is too much taken up with herſelf.

The ſimphony ſhould expreſs by the ſounds, as nearly as poſſible, the mockery and burſts of laughter from the reſt of the gardeners.

The coquet is ſadly tempted to gather ſome of the flowers for her own uſe, but dares not. In the moment that ſhe is expreſſing the greateſt mind for it, enters a gardener, who is not one of thoſe employed at work, and who makes up to her, ſhows her a fine noſegay, and ſignifies to her that he is come on purpoſe to offer it her. The coquet immediately leaves off her work; and this *pas-de-deux* begins by all the little grimaces and falſe coyneſs that the coquette oppoſes to her acceptance of the noſegay, but which at the ſame time only the more betray the mind ſhe has for it. The gardener keeps preſſing her to receive it. Her companions, curious

curious to ſee how this will end, advance little by little towards them: the gardeners follow them; and all ſurrounding the coquette and her ſwain, form a dance, in which the men ſeem to excite the lover not to take a denial, and the women want to engage the coquette to receive the noſegay; but all this, with a bantering air: at length the coquette accepts it, ſticks ſome of the flowers in her hair, and the reſt in her boſom. Her companions and the gardeners, ſhew by their ſigns, that they were very ſure ſhe would take the noſegay and return to their work.

Another gardener now enters, on the ſide oppoſite to that on which the firſt came, and advancing with an air of gaiety, preſents to the coquette, a ſmall baſket of fine fruit. In this *pas-de-trois*,

de-trois, ſhe a-freſh makes a great many faces, about whether ſhe will take the fruit or not. The ſwain of the noſegay expreſſes his vexation at the intervention of this rival, but the coquette manages ſo well that ſhe pacifies his jealouſy, and accepts the other's baſket of fruit, which ſhe hangs upon her arm. The gardeners do not quit their work, but they give to underſtand by ſhrewd ſigns, what they think of the coquette's game.

It is eaſy to conceive, that the compoſer of this muſic will, in the airs made for the *pas-de-deux*, and *pas-de-trois*, pay attention to the different affections that are to be characteriſed by the dance.

While the gardener who brought the noſegay, and the other who preſented

ſented the fruit, and the coquette, are all ſeemingly in good harmony, enters a third gardener, gallantly dreſſed, of a moſt engaging figure, having in his hands ſome pink-and-ſilver ribbons.

The ſimphony ſhould announce the arrival of this amiable gardener, by an air all expreſſive of briſkneſs and gay gallantry.

The gallant gardener approaches the coquette, and ſhews her thoſe glittering ribbons, which at once catch her eye, and give her a violent longing for them. This new-comer takes notice of the flowers in her hair and boſom, and of the fruit-baſket hung upon her arm. He gives her plainly to underſtand that ſhe muſt return all this to his rivals, if ſhe has a mind to have the ribbons. Theſe

begin

begin to expreſs their reſentment; but the coquette is ſo tranſported with the pleaſure of bedizening herſelf with thoſe ribbons, that no regard can with-hold her: ſhe returns the flowers to the one, and the fruit to the other, and takes the ribbons. The two gardeners, who ſee themſelves ſlighted in this manner, threaten him who has given the ribbons, and throw themſelves into attitudes of falling upon him; at which he puts on a reſolute look, and does not ſeem to fear them. Her companions and the gardeners leave their work, and advance ſome ſteps forwards, being curious to ſee how the ſcene will end.

The ſimphony ſhould here expreſs, by different airs, the reſentment of the

two

two first swains, and the resentment of the gallant gardener.

The coquette uses her best arts to pacify the two angry gardeners; but it is all in vain; they express their indignation, and are determined to take their revenge upon their rival. Just in the instant that they are preparing to attack him, and that he is stoutly standing upon his defence, comes in a female gardener, amiable, lively, but without any mark of coquettry in her looks or dress, who, by the eager and frightened air with which she interposes, and places herself between the gallant gardener and the others, to prevent their hurting him, discovers the tender regard she has for him.

The two others, in reſpect to this charming girl, dare not proceed; but, they give her to underſtand that the coquette has been ſo baſe as to return the flowers to the one, and the fruit to the other, that ſhe might get the ribbons from the gardener whom ſhe is protecting from their juſt reſentment.

At this the offended fair one expreſſes to her lover her indignation, but does not the leſs for that make the others ſenſible that ſhe will not ſuffer them to hurt him. She ſnatches next, from the coquette, the ribbons. The whole company round teſtify their approbation of what ſhe has done, even the two gardeners, who were, the moment before, ſo angry, burſt out a-laughing for joy, to ſee the coquette ſo well puniſhed, being now left without flowers, fruit, or ribbons; at which

which ſhe withdraws, overwhelmed with confuſion, and with the loud laugh and rallying geſtures of her companions and the other gardeners.

The gay gardener, vexed at having been ſurpriſed by his miſtreſs, in an act of gallantry to another woman, wants to paſs it off to her as merely a ſcheme to amuſe himſelf, and to laugh at the coquette. At firſt ſhe will not hear him; ſhe treads the ribbons under her feet, and is going away in a paſſion. He ſtops her, and entreats her forgiveneſs with an air ſo moving and penetrated, that, little by little, ſhe is diſarmed of her anger, and pardons him, in ſign of which ſhe gives him her hand.

There is no need of ſpecifying here what the dance in action, accompanied by

by the muſic, ſhould expreſs in this *pas-de-deux*; it is too obvious.

The gardeners, men and women, teſtify their rejoicing at this reconciliation, and the dance becomes general.

F I N I S.

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